

1912  
1962

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**GOLDEN JUBILEE  
SOUVENIR**

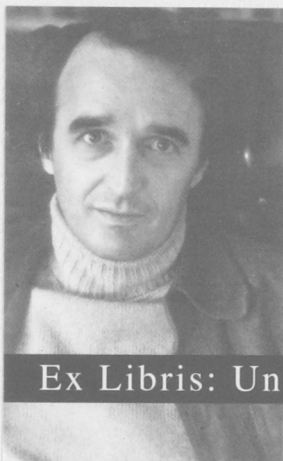
OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE

**ORDER OF OUR  
LADY OF CHARITY**

IN EDMONTON

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*From the library of*

**Richard Spafford**  
Western Canadian Legacy Collection

*Education is the progressive discovery of our own ignorance.*  
—Will Durant

Ex Libris: Universitatis Albertensis





1912  
1962

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GOLDEN JUBILEE  
SOUVENIR

OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE

ORDER OF OUR  
LADY OF CHARITY

IN EDMONTON

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Coat of Arms of the Order of Our Lady of Charity



## **DEDICATION**

This souvenir of their GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

is gratefully dedicated by

THE RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY  
in Edmonton

TO THEIR EXCELLENCIES

THE MOST REVEREND J. H. MACDONALD, D.D.

THE MOST REVEREND A. JORDAN, O.M.I., D.D.

to the devoted Clergy of the Archdiocese,  
to their parents, and to their kind friends and benefactors.

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SEGRETERIA DI STATO DI SUA SANTITÀ

## TELEGRAMMA

Num. di Protoc.	Parole	Data				
		Giorno	Mese	Anno	Ore	Minuti
226		7	April	1962		

Destinatario: HIS EXCELLENCY THE MOST REVEREND J. H. MACDONALD, D.D.

Destinazione: ARCHBISHOP OF EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA.

Testo: ON THE JOYOUS OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL IN EDMONTON OF THE SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF THE REFUGE, THE HOLY FATHER, WITH THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR THE BLESSINGS BESTOWED UPON THEM DURING THIS HALF CENTURY AND WITH PRAYERS FOR CONTINUED HEAVENLY FAVOUR, IMPARTS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY, TO MOTHER MARY OF THE DIVINE HEART AND ALL THE RELIGIOUS, THEIR BENEFACTORS AND FRIENDS PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATIONS, HIS SPECIAL PATERNAL APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

CARDINAL CICOGNANI







Archbishop's House  
264 Old Yonge Street  
Willowdale, Ontario

Reverend and Dear Mother Superior:

It is half a century ago, according to the records, that the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, commonly known as the Good Shepherd Sisters, established in Edmonton.

I wish to extend my cordial congratulations to the Community on the occasion of this notable anniversary and in a special way to Very Reverend Mother M. of the Annunciation whose kindness and charity I know so well and to whom I am personally indebted for so much help in the years now long sped into eternity.

Wishing you continued success and renewing my felicitations and very best wishes to the Community,

Yours devotedly in Christ,

+ James Edmund McGaughey

Archbishop of Toronto

Reverend Mother Superior,  
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.





ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE

10044 113 STREET  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

My Dear Sisters:

Old timers don't need to be reminded that you will soon be completing your Golden Jubilee of charity in the Archdiocese of Edmonton. It was still the diocese of St. Albert when you arrived, though its erection into an Archdiocese took place that same year.

Old people like me, who are not recognized as old timers, are thankful to be reminded of your approaching Jubilee, because of the debt we owe you for the constant and abundant charity practised by your Community during those 50 years. We are glad to be reminded, even though we may be able to do little of what we feel to be due on this happy occasion.

Congratulations first of all, on your fifty years of excellent service to the people of these parts, irrespective of race, color, or creed. Charity is the greatest of all the virtues, but its field is also the largest for those engaged in good works of this nature. To respond to all the demands made by death, broken homes and other causes is almost impossible; but there were very few such cases where you failed to meet the needs.

Your efforts to train the girls under your care were not always to your own satisfaction. You knew enough about educational systems to realize that proper training of youth cannot be given in quarters too small for even half the number forced upon your care. Your efforts met with better results when dealing with the orphans and the little ones. They responded willingly and gracefully because of the motherly care which you bestowed upon them. For some, it was their first experience with loving care; for others, it was a matter of receiving from you what death had deprived them of at home.

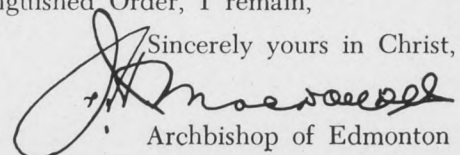
Many a time you had to go begging through the streets and stores of the City, to the parish churches of Edmonton and outside,—something which you were willing to do only because of the little ones who would otherwise suffer from hunger and want. I have often heard it said that you were never refused when calling on stores and offices in the City, because of the knowledge which the people possessed concerning your work.

The feeling in nearly all cases was that they wished they could give more. Thanks be to God this begging from door to door is no longer necessary because of the better understanding that people have of social problems, and the best way of meeting them in a world where so-called charity has very little reference to Almighty God. In those days there were more saloons than Children's Aid Societies, and governments had not yet begun to view the matter as a social problem for which they might be financially responsible.

The reasons for which you were founded are still with us, and will be, in varying forms, to the end of time. The powers of darkness will never cease trying to pervert souls; and the helpers they have today in this materialistic world are more numerous than ever before. However, we feel confident that while you may have to adapt yourselves to changing conditions, you will never lose sight of the goal for which you were founded, nor of the specific purpose for which you were invited here by Archbishop Legal fifty years ago.

Praying God to bless you all, and to inspire many others to enter your distinguished Order, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Archbishop of Edmonton



**ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE**

10044 113 STREET  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Mother Mary of the Divine Heart  
Superior,  
Convent of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mother Superior:

One day in 1918 Father J. P. Reynolds, O.M.I., Parish Priest of St. Joseph's, sent me on an errand to a Convent on 111th Street here in Edmonton. A Sister admitted me to the parlour where I found myself confronted by one of the tallest nuns I have ever seen. Her accent made me think of Ireland. When I told her why I had come, she said (as all other Sisters do in similar circumstances) "I'll speak to Mother." Mother, of course, was Mother Aloysius and the very tall Sister was Sister Mary of the Annunciation.

This was my introduction to your Order. The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge are devoted women who dedicate their lives to our Lord, Jesus Christ. While serving Him in His little ones and the unfortunate, they seek to sanctify themselves. The Sister of the Good Shepherd (as you are popularly called) is the tangible expression of the compassion of Our Lord. She is moved, by the sight of physical and spiritual misery, to devote herself to bring comfort and love to those who are abandoned and in distress.

For fifty years, the Sister of the Good Shepherd has been in our midst; countless are the children and young women who have benefited by her intelligent labours. On this account she is honoured and revered by people in all walks of life. She is held in esteem and reverence and admiration exceeded by none other.

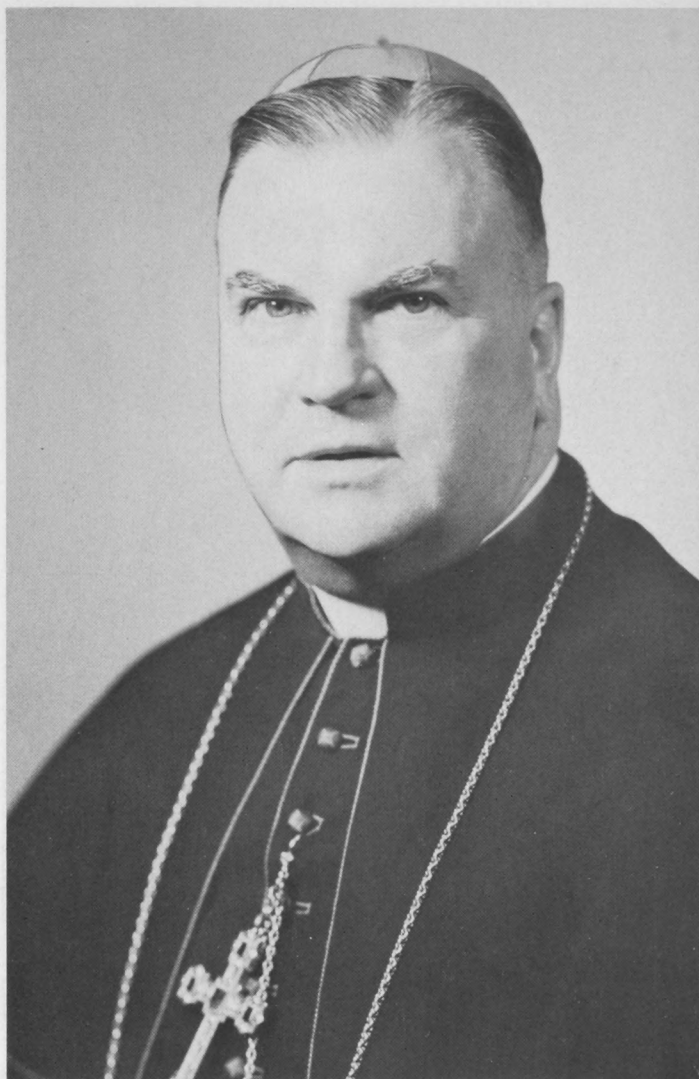
In 1912, five Sisters came to Edmonton. Happily the "very tall one" Sister Mother of the Annunciation, still dwells with us. Throughout this half century, she has carried out the noblest aspirations of the Sister of the Good Shepherd, and, even in her lifetime, has become almost a legendary figure. She represents all that is best in the annals of Christian Charity. It is a privilege to salute her! Along with her I salute all of you on this Golden Jubilee of your coming to Edmonton!

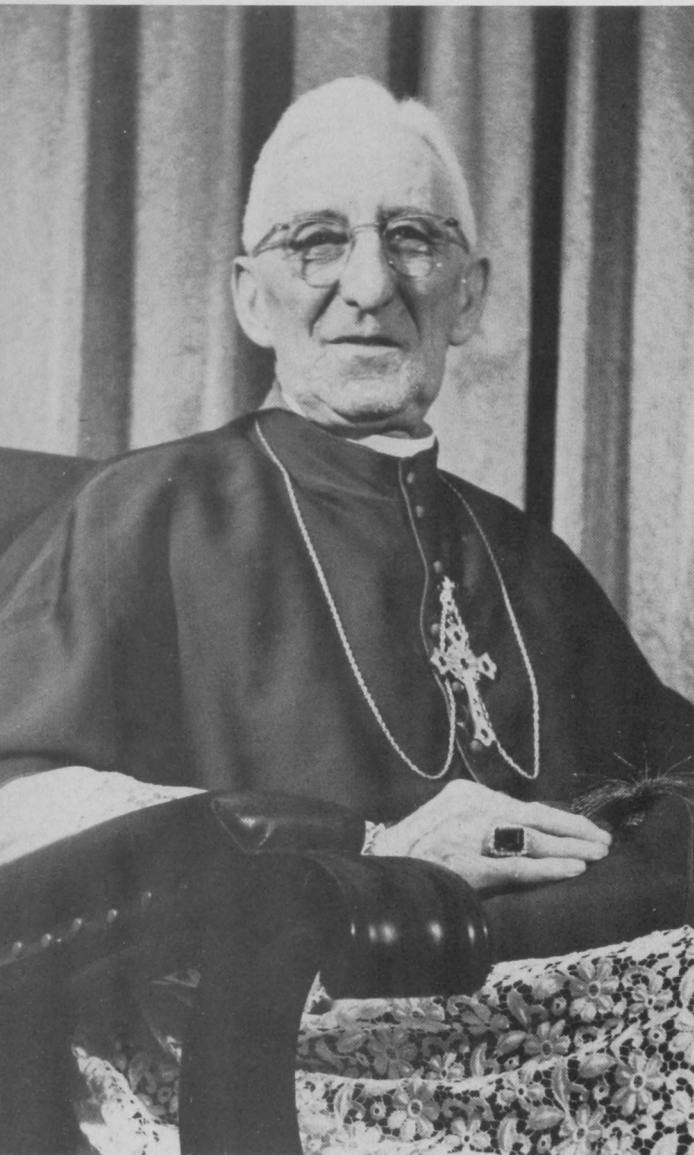
May God bless all of you who are serving Our Lord and his little ones here in Edmonton, both the living Sisters and those who have gone before.

Sincerely yours in our Blessed Lord,

*H. A. Goodman O.M.I.*

Coadjutor Archbishop of Edmonton





**BISHOP'S RESIDENCE**

910-7 A Street N. West

**Calgary - Alberta**

M.M. Divine Heart, supr.,  
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mother Superior:

I am happy to join with your many friends on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the advent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge to Edmonton and Alberta, and pay a tribute of sincere esteem to the Sisters for their extraordinary record of mercy during the past half century. With the advent of the Sisters came the apostolate of St. John Eudes which has flourished since by the labors and zeal of the Sisters for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their charges. We thank God for all the good He has accomplished in our midst through the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity and we fervently pray that He will multiply their numbers and increase their endeavors for His glory and the welfare of souls.

It is a real pleasure to add a word of congratulation to Sister Mary of the Annunciation, one of the founding Sisters, who is the living link between the past and the present, in this half century of Christian Charity.

Yours cordially in Christ,

*+ Francis P. Carroll*

Bishop of Calgary



## Archdiocese of Regina

Rev. Mother Mary Divine Heart,  
Superior, Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Reverend Mother:

I am very pleased to extend to you, Mother Mary of the Annunciation, and your Community my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of your foundation in the City of Edmonton.

At a time when the increasing provisions of the State, with its multiple agencies of welfare from the cradle to the grave, may seem to have modified the traditional function of charity, it is good to recall that fifty years ago the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge were engaged in works of mercy long before these became a statutory responsibility.

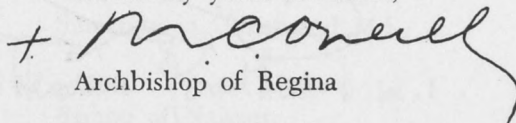
In more recent years when the vast structure of social services has become part of the pattern of modern life your Community has never lost sight of its original ideals. While making the necessary adjustments to such a pattern it has not forgotten to respect the human person and his innate dignity as a child of God redeemed through Christ. The divine command that "the man who loves God must be one who loves his brother as well" has been your guiding principle.

On this happy occasion my wish for your Community is best expressed in the inspired words of the psalmist:

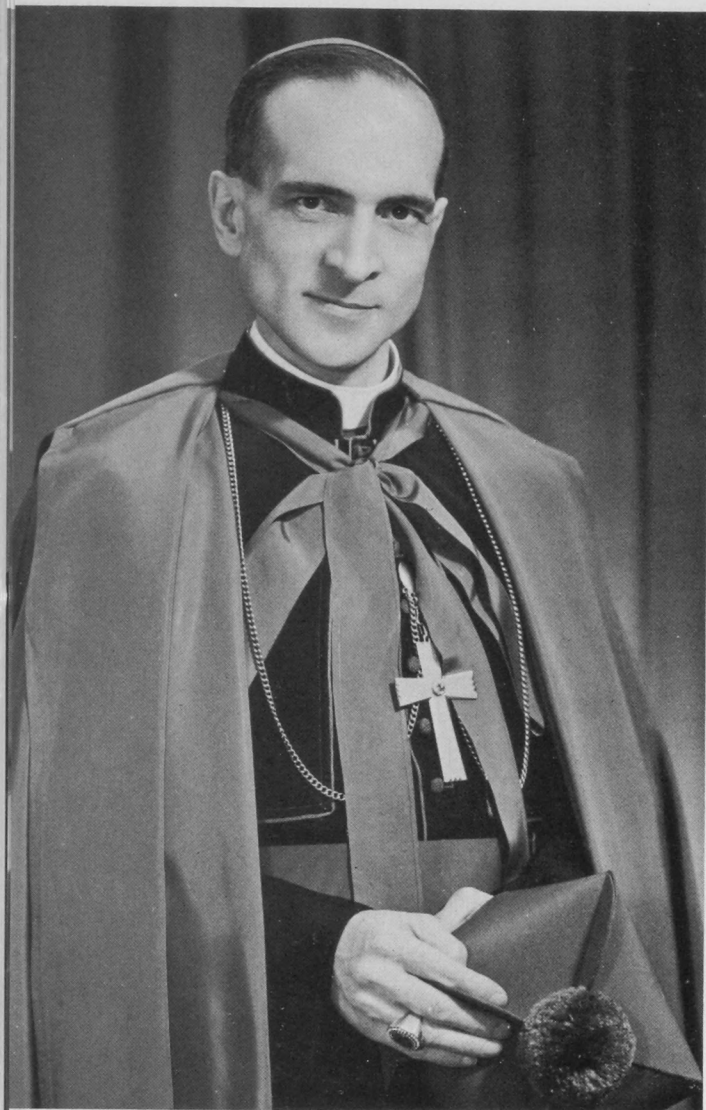
"Blessed is that man who takes thought for the poor and the destitute; the Lord will keep him safe in time of trouble.

May the Lord watch over him and give him long life and happiness on earth." (Psalm 40)

Devotedly yours in Christ, .

+   
Archbishop of Regina





Evêché—Bishop's Residence  
Saint—Paul (Alberta)

Reverend Mother M. Divine Heart, Superior,  
The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Sister Superior:

I am very well pleased to extend to you and all your Sisters my best congratulations on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of your arrival in Edmonton. May God bless you and reward you in His own divine way for all this devoted service to a great and good cause where you share in the merciful sentiments of the Heart of Christ.

And since by her profession, Sister Mary of the Annunciation is equally a Golden Jubilarian, to her also my best congratulations and wishes!

Most sincerely yours in Our Lord, and the Church,

Bishop of Saint Paul, Alberta





**Evêché**  
**Bishop's Residence**

Reverend Sister M. of the Divine Heart,  
Superior,  
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Sister Superior:

I am happy to be informed that you will be celebrating in June the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of your Home opened in Edmonton in June 1912. This will allow you to look back over the years of constant devotion in carrying out the work for which St. John Eudes founded your Congregation over 300 years ago. I am sure that the clergy of Alberta, the religious communities of women and your many friends will be delighted to join with you on the occasion of these festivities.

Ever since 1926, and more especially since 1928 when the Oblate Fathers of St. John's College took over the chaplaincy of the O'Connell Institute, I have been in frequent contact with your Sisters. I shall never forget dear Mother Aloysius, Mother Mary of the Annunciation and the many other Sisters with whom I worked both in the O'Connell Institute and on 96th Street. Could we analyse in detail the good that has been done throughout these years, for both young and older girls, we would be astonished at the number of girls who have been aided and whose lives in the world are a credit to the institution in which they have been formed.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity have taken in their Home girls of all nationalities and color, and in their zeal have constantly been thoroughly Catholic. I frequently wondered how it was possible with such a limited number of Sisters, especially in the earlier days, you were able to accomplish so much. I am particularly pleased, however, that in these latter years, younger recruits have joined the Senior Sisters and multiply the capacity of all for good.

Again, may this Golden Anniversary be one of thanksgiving, of rejoicing and my earnest prayer is that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd may carry on ever more intensely the ideals of their Order in their personal sanctification and their dedication to girls who need their love and deep faith.

Sincerely in Christ and M.I.,

*+Henri Ponthier O.M.I.*  
Bishop of Naissus,  
Vicar Apostolic of Grouard





# THE BISHOP OF NELSON

813 WARD STREET,

NELSON, B. C., Canada

Mother M. Divine Heart, Superior,  
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mother Divine Heart:

The Golden Jubilee of both Sister Mary of the Annunciation and the Edmonton Community is a most notable event in the ecclesiastical history of Edmonton. May it serve as the occasion for remembering the religious devotion and service of all those Sisters who made the 50 years so great a blessing to the Archdiocese. Their daily fidelity to duty, and their charity to those most in need, the orphans and the unfortunate are recorded in heaven. But it is fitting to remember them now for the benefit of the living.

May the representative of the founders, Sister Mary of the Annunciation, and the present Community, flourish and prosper through God's abundant blessing.

With continued prayers,

*W. E. Doyle*

Bishop of Nelson





ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR  
WINDSOR, ONTARIO  
CANADA

Sister M. Divine Heart, Superior,  
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Sister M. Divine Heart and Sisters:

I understand that you will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of your original foundation in Edmonton during the month of June of the current year, and I hasten to extend to you my sincere congratulations and prayerful good wishes. It would seem only fitting and proper also that Mother Mary of the Annunciation should be singled out for a special word of greeting, as I believe that she was one of the five pioneer Sisters, and that she will be celebrating the Golden Jubilee of her Religious Profession at the same time.

I was quite familiar with your zealous work during my twelve years in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, and I am not unaware, therefore, of the great spirit of sacrifice and devotion that sustained you in your difficult and sometimes not too fully appreciated apostolate.

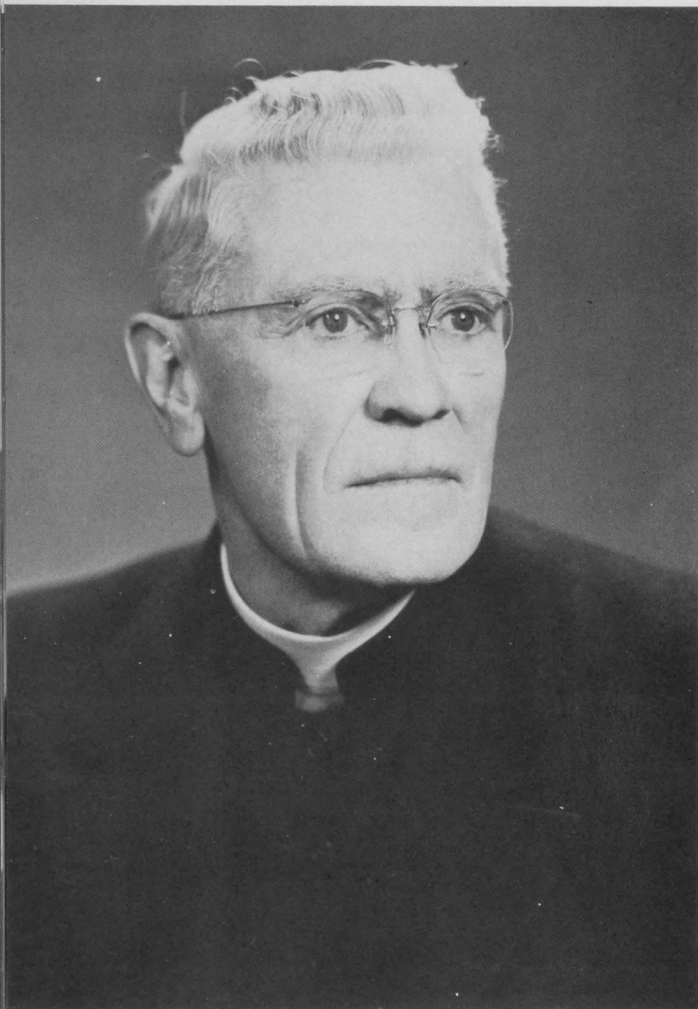
May God continue to bless your work, and may He shower down His graces upon each and every one of you in ever-increasing measure.

Most sincerely in J.M.J.,

+ *b. L. Nelligan*

Titular Bishop of Fenice





## Sacred Heart Church

10821 - 96th Street Phone GA 2-3052  
Edmonton - Alberta

To Mother Mary Divine Heart,  
Superior,  
Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mother Superior:

I thank you for your recent letter announcing the forthcoming Golden Jubilee of your Order's coming to this city. Your proposed booklet is a happy thought and an appropriate gesture. I am glad to add to the chorus of congratulations that will greet your Community on this auspicious occasion and to wish you well.

This has been a busy half century for a cloistered Order such as yours, devoted as it is so much to prayer and contemplation. There have been moves, improvements and building, but above and beyond all that there has been constant attention to the task of human salvage which characterizes your particular vocation in God's Church. That special calling is set forth in the final word of your Order's official title, "Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge."

To those who have had the privilege of being associated with your institutes and have had the opportunity to observe the good works accomplished over many years, the "Good Shepherd Home" has been indeed a refuge for thousands of unfortunates. Your doors have been open to all girls and young women seeking help. These comprise children of different ages, the product of diverse and often barren domestic situations. In this western country those in authority have had to face an undue proportion of the problem of broken families. Children have been left to the mercy of a largely indifferent world. These are the least of God's "little ones." They need the kind of care and love which is difficult to come by except from devoted people like the Sisters who have prepared themselves well for this, their life's work.

Then there are the young women (still called children) whose problems are different but whose need is none the less great. Your Sisters have been God's choice to welcome them into the shadow of the cloister and the saving Presence of our Eucharistic Lord. Here their wounds are healed, their troubled minds soothed to rest, education is provided and their souls are strengthened against the day of their departure and their again mingling with the world.

May God continue to bless and fructify your labours, sacrifices and prayers.

Truly in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Msgr. M. J. O'Gorman





Collège Saint-Jean

8406-91E RUE EDMONTON, ALTA.

Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Rev. Sister Superior:

St. John's College and the members of its staff are very happy to extend their congratulations to the well-deserving Order of the Sisters of Charity of the Refuge on the occasion of their Golden Jubilee.

The Church has always had a special solicitude for the poor, the abandoned, and the less privileged in life. In order to carry this special aspect of Christian charity in a more organized and systematic way the Order of the Sisters of Charity was founded. In their 300 years of existence these dedicated women have accumulated experience; they have tested methods and theories; they have established their work on very sound Christian principles and complete dedication. They have known for centuries now that in the rehabilitation of these people, personality must be respected, that training must be adapted to times and that each individual must be offered a suitable education. They have known and experienced that what the child needs is dedicated love and this they have offered the child as no one else could.

There was a time when your work interested no one but the Church and charitable societies. In the past, we have been quite content to rely on your generosity for the care of the underprivileged. Not so to-day. Now that we have evolved towards a welfare state, many newcomers became interested in your work: it offers positions and possibilities for financial advancement. These people are beginning to discover the law of love, principle of social welfare, that has guided you for so many years.

With the population of Alberta and particularly that of Edmonton, St. John's College applauds the great work you have done these 50 years, and it applauds the great work of one amongst you who has been all the way a symbol of courage, faith and dedication, Mother Mary of the Annunciation.

May the Sisters of Good Shepherd continue their generous work and may their apostolate continue to call upon them God's choicest blessings.

Ad faustissimos annos,

Rector





*Caritas et Spes*



## *Council of Catholic Charities*

*The Archdiocese of Edmonton*

Mother Divine Heart, Superior,  
Convent of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mother Divine Heart:

During your 50 years of operation, we have entered an era which is one of great material prosperity, expanding space boundaries and increasing social awareness. Along with these advances, human need is on the increase.

The people of God, be they young or old, still search for the Charity of Christ to lighten their burdens. Unemployed husbands, children separated from their parents, spouses seeking marital counselling, persons in need of psychiatric services, those in need of material and emotional assistance, the immigrant, the delinquent—all these and more look to the agencies of Catholic Charities in this Archdiocese in the hope that they will find the fire of Christ's love.

Following the arrival in Edmonton on the Feast of St. Joseph in 1912, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge have always given generously and actively displayed this love for the less fortunate of our Archdiocese. You have met well the need in our community for a training school for girls and also a substitute home for children. At times your burdens and responsibilities have been difficult to cope with but, through the difficulties, you and your Community have continued to supply the emotional and physical needs to those entrusted to you, enabling them to return to society as God loving, secure citizens.

Be assured of my interest, co-operation and prayers for your continued success.

Yours in Christ,

Director



LIVE JESUS AND MARY!  
REVEREND MOTHER PRESIDENT

OF THE FEDERATION OF THE MONASTERIES  
OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY

—••—  
4500 West Davis Street  
Dallas 11, Texas

V. Hon. Mother Mary of the Divine Heart,  
Monastery of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

V. Hon. Dear Mother and Sisters:

With unanimous transports of joy, we extend our heartiest congratulations to you, Honored Mother, and to each dear Sister on this Golden Jubilee. In prayer and in spirit we shall be with you as Our Lord crowns His own work of fifty golden years. May your future burn as brightly as your Zeal and be blessed with the Salvation of many Souls.

In the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and in the love of  
St. John Eudes,

*Mother Mary of St. John.*

Blessed Be God!

President,  
Am. Fed. of O.L.C.





ALBERTA



OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

I am pleased to take this opportunity of expressing on behalf of the Government and the citizens of Alberta congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge.

Your fine Christian work has meant a great deal to many since the home was founded in June of 1912.

Sincere best wishes to all who have devoted time and energies for the benefit of others.

Yours very truly,

*Clare R. Manning*  
Premier



## The City of Edmonton

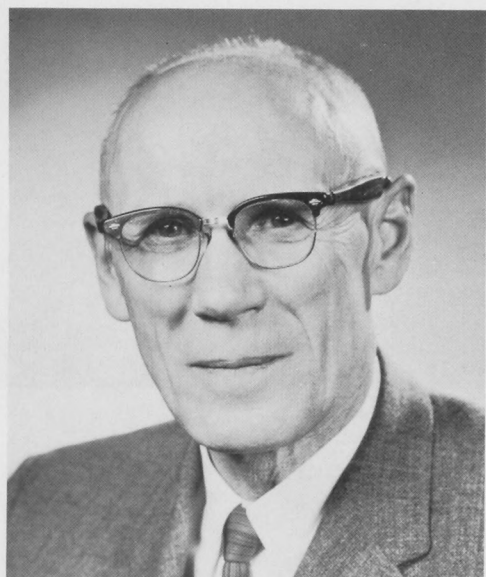
The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Reverend Mother:

May I take this opportunity to express the congratulations of the City on reaching this milestone and to express our appreciation of the great good your Institute has done within the City during these years.

Yours very truly,

*Edmund A. Hofer*  
Mayor







DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE  
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

Mother M. Divine Heart,  
Superior,  
The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity,  
8421 - 101st Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mother Divine Heart:

I am pleased to offer the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity congratulations on this fiftieth year of service in Edmonton. The care of delinquent and neglected girls is a service which by its nature does not receive a great deal of publicity and recognition. Nevertheless, it is realized by those in the welfare field that such a service requires unlimited concern, patience, skill and dedication. While it is not always possible to help those in need with whom we come into contact, I am sure that the Sisters of Charity have done their utmost for the girls who have come to them throughout the years and that many of these young people will recall their concern as constituting a major influence in their lives.

I should also like to take this opportunity to wish you success in the service that you continue to offer in the future.

Yours sincerely,

*Ed Jorgensen*

Minister of Public Welfare



Edmonton in 1912, pictured from the South Side, with the Parliament Building and the High Level Bridge under construction and the old Hudson's Bay Company Fort on the north side of the river.



Edmonton in 1962, with the Parliament Building in the foreground.



The High Level Bridge, 1962, looking from the Parliament Building to the South Side and the University of Alberta campus in the distance.





**a**T THE END of 1587 a young Norman, named Isaac Eudes, who was then studying for the priesthood, learnt to his great dismay that all his brothers had died of the plague, leaving nobody at home to look after his aged parents and the family property. The feudal nature of the family holding left him no other choice but to abandon his hope of the priesthood and return home to the little farm at Ri, a tiny village in the horse-breeding region of Lower Normandy; so with the simple matter-of-factness of his kind, home went Isaac to become, if not a good priest, a very good farmer. It was typical of him also that he never relinquished his love for piety and learning: he recited the divine office daily all his life and continued to study as occasion offered, so that he acquired quite a reputation as a scholar and no little skill as a surgeon-doctor.

At the age of thirty-one he married a gentle, generous-hearted girl named Martha Corbin. Three years went by and still the pair were childless, so together they went in pilgrimage to a shrine of Our Lady, where they prayed for offspring and promised that, if God gave them a child, it would be offered to serve Him and His holy Mother. Their prayer was answered and even before the birth of the child (which took place in November, 1601) the parents renewed their pilgrimage to the holy place, this time to thank the Virgin for the gift of parenthood. The child that was the immediate answer to their prayers, a son, whom they named John, was the first of seven children, three boys and four girls, and he was by no means the only one of them to win immortal fame.

We can imagine the joy and happiness that the birth of John brought into the life of his parents. We can imagine also the care that was lavished on so precious a possession all during his infancy and childhood. The love and devotion of his parents for him impressed John deeply, all the more as it contained nothing of that foolish sentimentality that serves only to pamper the body and neglect the spirit, leaving little ones devoid of the moral strength they need to face life's battle, and when, in his old age, he listed in a book the favours and graces he had received from God during his life, one of the chief ones was that "God granted me the grace to be born of parents who were in a modest condition of life, who lived in His fear, and who, I have every reason to believe, died in His grace and love."

There being no school in Ri, John as we might expect, received his first schooling from his scholarly father. Then having outgrown the elements that were all his father had time to teach him, he was sent to a neighbouring priest for further instruction—his mother's fears that the daily journey to and from the village where this priest lived would injure the delicate health of her "pet" were pooh-poohed by John's father, who said: "The walk will open his lungs and do him good," and, of course, the man was right! Father Blanette, the priest in question, was both a scholar and a saint. Association with him had an exhilarating effect on young Eudes, who wrote as an old man in his Memoir of the Gifts of God: "his example and his devout instruction taught me very much." In particular, Father Blanette taught John to have a great love for the Holy Eucharist and to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion as frequently as the times allowed: he also filled the lad with a surpassing devotion to the Mother of God: indeed, John wrote later on: "I gladly yielded to everybody else as regards talent, learning and so on, but I simply could not endure that anyone should outstrip me in what concerns trust in and love for the Mother of God."

At the age of fourteen John was sent farther afield, to the Jesuit school at Caen, thirty-six miles away, where he lived with some friends of his father. From the Fathers he learned rhetoric

## **FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES** 

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and the humanities and also developed the natural virtues of self-reliance and clarity of judgment. From their teaching and example he came to realize that effort is wasted if God is not glorified thereby, and the loyalty of the Jesuits and their love for the Holy See impressed him so profoundly that ever afterwards he hated all that savoured of heresy and there was no place in his heart for the anti-papal, soul-withering doctrines of the Jansenists.

His classical studies ended, John decided to become a diocesan priest, and commenced taking lectures at the University, where, in the words of a modern biographer, "he prospered intellectually, but he was not uplifted by companionship as he had been among the Jesuits." His fellow-students were bright enough, decent young men, most of them, but a bit too worldly in their outlook and too filled with material ambitions to accord with John's spirituality. He consulted his Jesuit confessor, who suggested to him to join the French Oratorian community, a group of high-minded priests, who lived together without vows, that had been established at Paris some twelve years previously and of which a branch house had lately been founded at Caen itself. It was a happy thought. John presented himself to the Oratorians, was accepted and repaired to Paris to join the community and to complete his studies for the priesthood. It was Lady Day, March 25th, 1623, when Father de Berulle, the founder of the French Oratorians, received him into his spiritual family.

Under the inspiring direction of the Oratorians John progressed rapidly along the road of sanctity. The holy men filled him with a love for the priesthood and an appreciation of the Holy Mass that were to him as food and drink to a hungry man: he thrived on such spirituality and, in addition, he learned how to pray and meditate, so that the truths of theology were made to give depth to his prayer and to provide the foundation for his entire spiritual life.

On December 20th, 1625, he was ordained priest and on Christmas night he celebrated his first Mass at an altar of Our Lady. One may ask why he should have waited some days before celebrating his Mass. He answers the query in the words that were frequently on his lips: "To say Mass well one would need three eternities, one in which to prepare, one in which to celebrate, and the third eternity in which to make a worthy thanksgiving."

Full of zeal and burning with the desire to do great things for God, John Eudes was now made to learn how to wait on the Almighty for the manifestation of the Divine Will. Scarcely had he been raised to the priesthood when he fell dangerously ill and was sent for convalescence to a quiet village, some ten miles from Paris, where there was a historic chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Virtues. Here he remained, practically in retreat, for about a year, recuperating in body and still more maturing in spirit. Then he returned to Paris, where he learned the grim news that Normandy was in the grip of plague once more. At once he besought his superiors to permit him to go there to care for the dying, and so repeatedly and earnestly did he make this request that he was at length given permission despite his uncertain state of health, and then he set out on foot, like a beggar, with only a knapsack on his back. Arrived in Caen he devoted himself fearlessly and without respite to the work of giving spiritual and temporal aid to the plague-stricken, doing what he could to relieve their great sufferings and at the end assisting them to die well. When, after two months, the epidemic ceased, he retired to the Oratory at Caen, but with the return of warmer weather, the plague also returned and again he showed himself



to be a true man of God, filled with the intrepidity and fortitude of the ideal apostle. He organized a great campaign of devotion to Our Lady and had statues of her set up in prominent places in the city of Caen; then only did the contagion cease.

In 1632 he was appointed to take part in the work of preaching missions to the people of Normandy. From the outset his success was phenomenal: people thronged to hear him and formed up in endless queues about his confessional. Eminent among the qualities that shone forth in his character were simplicity and sincerity in his preaching and limitless sympathy and patience in dealing with poor sinners in the tribunal of penance.

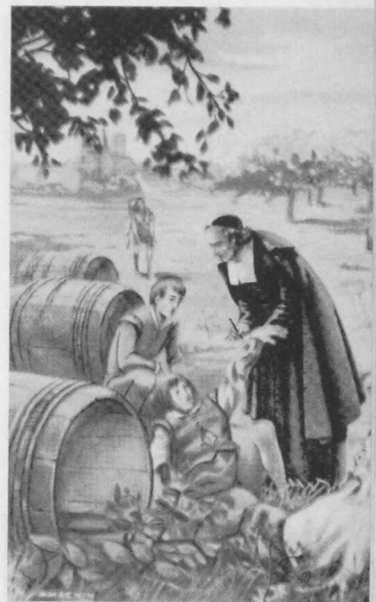
But great as were the results that were brought about by his missions, they did not suffice to allay his thirst for the salvation of souls. He kept pondering over how souls could be saved by other means than by missions. In particular his heart went out to the Magdalens, the fallen women of the towns in which he preached, who were more tragically afflicted than were the plague-stricken. Despised by all, even those who traded on their weaknesses, deprived of all honest means of earning a livelihood, despair and sin seemed to seal their souls for damnation: sin bred despair, and despairing, they fell more deeply into sin. Father Eudes had obtained help and succour for some few of them by getting his friends to receive them into their own homes and preserve them from the hunger and poverty that would surely lead again to their downfall. But this touched only the fringe of the great problem.

One day, as John Eudes was passing through the streets of Caen on the way to visit a church with some of his friends, he passed the house of a certain charitable lady named Madeleine Lamy, who had more than once sheltered some of the Magdalens for him. Madeleine was at her door as the party approached, and greeted John jokingly (but more than half in earnest also) as follows: "Where are you off to now? I can guess. To visit some church and to have a lovely time before the images of the saints and so on. Then you'll come away feeling grand and pious. But you are on the wrong track altogether. You should come down to earth. Try to establish a home for these poor girls who are being lost for want of help and advice."

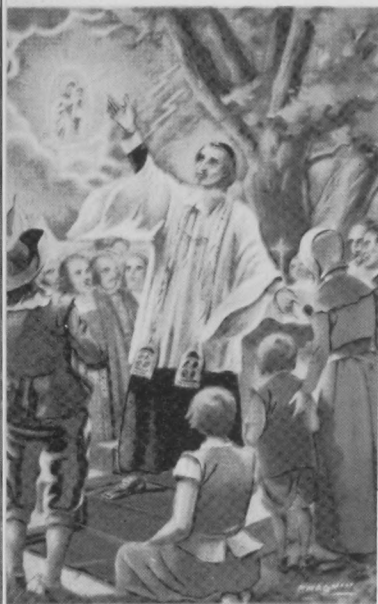
The remarks were received with the same friendliness with which they were spoken, and the more John pondered them, the more he realized the soundness of Madeleine's judgment; but to get a house one needed much money and to run a house one needed not only much more money, but also a fairly steady flow of it and in addition, very dependable personnel. The establishment of such an institution became, however, an ideal that was henceforth very much in his thoughts and on his missions he spoke of it and gradually collected the funds and interested various people in the project. At length the time seemed reasonably ripe to make a start and on December 8th, 1641, that is about six years after the little *rencontre* with Madeleine Lamy, he gathered the Magdalens into a Refuge of their own, a house that he had obtained for them on the outskirts of the city of Caen. In charge of the new institution he placed a lady named Margaret Morin, a converted Huguenot, full of enthusiasm and big ideas, who at once adopted a religious dress and probably fancied herself as the foundress of a wonderful new order of nuns. Not for long was she alone in charge, for quite soon some other good ladies came to take part in running the house with her. Naturally enough in such a work, difficulties were not lacking and Margaret's enthusiasm was not proof against them. In 1644 she abandoned the task, as did also several others, leaving the care of the house of



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
contracts an alliance with the Most  
Blessed Virgin Mary



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
assisting the plague-stricken



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
while preaching, wards off a rain  
storm (Valognes 1643)



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
receiving the Sacred Hearts of  
Jesus and Mary

Refuge to two young postulants, one being the thirteen-year-old niece of Father Eudes himself.

In his anxiety the founder turned to the Sisters of the Visitation for help and they sent him three sisters, among them Mother Patin, who was to prove herself an excellent superioress. The whole arrangement was but a makeshift one, to solve a critical situation, but in fact it proved how Providence had part in what was being done, for under Mother Patin the new institute prospered as it would never have done under Margaret Morin. The latter was not only indiscreet and over-enthusiastic, but she was unfitted to rule and particularly incompetent to deal with the temperamentally unstable Magdalens. She was something of a domineering type, too rigid, insufficiently gentle, unable to realize that by yielding in little things one may sometimes have one's own way in what is more important. Her Huguenot background did not fit her to form the spiritual outlook of very young postulants, and all in all one cannot help feeling that Father Eudes must really have felt relieved when he learned that Margaret Morin had departed.

The Sisters of the Visitation, on the other hand, had everything that Margaret lacked. Founded by the gentle Saint Francis de Sales, who had died not so very long before, they had all that holy man's attractive spirit and engaging piety. Especially remarkable was it that their devotional outlook was so utterly in harmony with that of Father Eudes himself that one wonders if the latter had not always hoped to have their intimate assistance in the direction of his new foundation. From Saint Francis de Sales the Visitation sisters had received a touching devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Our Blessed Lady, which were the particular devotions of Saint John Eudes himself.\*

All this is most important as indicative of the spirit that was to animate the new institute, the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge. This Community, one might say, was conceived of the devotion of Saint John Eudes and born of the devotion of Saint Francis de Sales to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It originated in an age in which mankind had forgotten the love of God for men, and in which the frigid breath of Jansenism had swept over Christendom bringing with it a wintry atmosphere, wherein piety languished and seemed in danger of perishing. It needed the charity of men like Saint Francis de Sales, Saint John Eudes, Saint Vincent de Paul and their great collaborators to keep the warmth of holiness in the hearts of men. It was truly providential that the answer to the evils of the age was forthcoming in the foundation of so many charitable orders of priests and sisters. And in the case of the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge the inspiration and motive for its existence was the purest love of God and His Blessed Mother. To quote a writer to whom we have referred already, "It was not as a speculative theologian that John Eudes spoke of the Sacred Heart, it was in his own agony of heart at seeing the spiritual misery of the people of Normandy. Where was there any proper appreciation of God's love? The world had forgotten God's love. Only the word HEART could express it; and the Heart had to be called Sacred . . . Also it included Our Lady's Heart. As Father Eudes explained:

'God has united so closely these two hearts that one can say with truth that they are only one heart, because they have always been animated with a like spirit and filled with the same sentiments and affections'."

\* His Holiness Pope Leo XIII declared (6th January, 1903) St. John Eudes to be "Author of the Liturgical Worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary."



In 1644 he clothed the eldest of his young postulants in the religious habit that Our Lady revealed to a very pious woman in whose prayers Father Eudes had the greatest confidence. The outer robe was white, with a cincture of the same colour. Suspended in front the religious wore a silver heart bearing the coat-of-arms of the new Order: Our Lady holding her divine Son surrounded by lilies and roses. Under the robe, over her heart, the sister wore a blue cross, and she was henceforth to be known as a Religious of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

In 1666 the constitutions of the new community were formally approved by Rome. These rules and constitutions form an admirable code of balanced piety and are perfectly adapted to fill the religious of Our Lady of Charity with the perfect spirit and spirituality needed for their own advancement in holiness and for their particular work of saving sinners. "The work as a whole," says one writer, "is a veritable masterpiece: everything in it is arranged with incomparable wisdom, balance, tact and foresight." To the three ordinary vows of religion, that is, poverty, chastity and obedience, Father Eudes added for his daughters a fourth, namely, to dedicate themselves forever to the care of fallen women. This latter idea was so novel that it gave rise to much controversy. The Magdalen was so despised that lives dedicated to the rescue of such unfortunate women might seem despicable also: but Saint John Eudes would welcome being insulted for the sake of Christ and souls and he had good reason, therefore, to rejoice when Rome gave its approval to the new work.

In addition to the formal constitutions which he drew up for his daughters the Saint left them many other directives filled with spiritual warnings and good advice. Some of these are a shrewd combination of simplicity and profound spirituality: this for example:

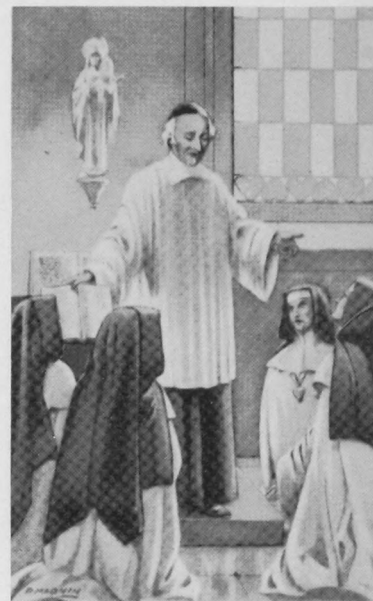
"Let the heart of every one (of the sisters) be a living image of purest love, perfect charity, profound humility, exact obedience, invincible patience, complete self-sacrifice, generous affection for the Cross, utter submission to the Will of God, and of all the other eminent virtues that reign in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary."

Others of his admonitions have a quaint, but attractive, old-world flavour, as this will serve to show:

"Treat your own will as if it were a dragon of the most poisonous type!"

Most of all he desired that each of the communities founded by him (for he established another great congregation also<sup>o</sup>) should resemble the Holy Family of Nazareth and that there should always be found in it that mutual affection and consideration for others that predominated in the home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Authority should be exercised with discretion, power wielded with the greatest gentleness. Those in charge of novices must not scold them "with words sharp and bitter," nor impose too many mortifications on them. He himself imposed no great austerities on his religious, lest such burdens should weigh too grievously on the weaker members. It is this broadmindedness, this realization of the manner in which one individual differs from another and of how variedly persons react to circumstances, that shines forth in the rules and constitutions that he drew up for his communities. His children still jealously guard this



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
giving the Constitutions to the  
Religious of Our Lady of Charity



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
founder of Seminaries

<sup>o</sup> The priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists).



**SAINT JOHN EUDES**  
Father, Doctor, Apostle of the  
liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts

beautiful spirit that he seemed to bequeath to them: they enjoy the freedom of the children of God, they serve the Lord with the unconstrained generosity of hearts that labour for love. As Saint Augustine said: *Da mihi amantem et sentiet quod dico*: A lover will understand what I mean! And at the present day anybody who visits the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity in Edmonton (or one of the other Eudist houses) will not fail to appreciate the fact that although it is so far removed in time and space from seventeenth century Caen, the primitive spirit breathed forth by Saint John Eudes is still very much in evidence, there is still all its compelling sweetness and simplicity: for such a visitor the words of the great Apostle of the Nations will come to have deeper significance: "Let all your things be done in charity." (1 Cor. XVI, 14.)

With the remainder of the Holy Founder's life we are not concerned here. Suffice it to say that not only was he a most active and remarkable missionary, but he was also a great writer, who has enriched religious literature with an amazing number of books and pamphlets on practically every aspect of piety and ascetical theology. Among his compositions were the first Mass and the first books ever written in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It is no wonder that the Church has honoured him with the title of "Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary."<sup>o</sup>

All during his life he had suffered much, being misunderstood and misrepresented and thwarted in his efforts to satisfy his overwhelming urge to save souls, and labouring always under the handicap of indifferent health. His last years were a real martyrdom, for his physical ailments became well-nigh unbearable and opposition to his hopes and plans seemed only to increase. Yet he bore all with the greatest patience. At length the time came for him to die. His maladies confined him to bed and he realized that now he must leave the completion of his works to the goodness of God. When the priest brought the Holy Viaticum to him, the old, feeble missionary begged the infirmarian to aid him to rise. Casting himself on his knees on the bare floor, he recited the *Confiteor*, and asked pardon of his brethren for any offence he had ever committed against them. Then he received the Body of Christ, exhorted his companions again to live always in peace and mutual love, and then, having commended them to God and His Blessed Mother, he calmly yielded up his soul to his Maker. The date was August 19th, 1681.

WILLIAM P. O'KEEFFE, C.M.

<sup>o</sup> *His Holiness Saint Pius X—Decree of Beatification, 25th April, 1909.*

### Story of the Coat of Arms of the Order of Our Lady of Charity (Pictured on frontispiece)

The Sisters wear on their breast a silver heart on which is embossed the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus. On the right is a spray of lilies, symbolic of purity; on the left a spray of roses, symbolic of charity. On the reverse side is their motto: LIVE JESUS AND MARY.

The Blessed Virgin is in a heart, that is to say, reigning with her Divine Son in the heart of each one of her daughters, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity. She is seated, because the Queen should be seated to be enthroned. Her position is more clearly defined by the fact that she bears the sceptre and the royal crown.

The Coat of Arms is an eloquent symbol which continually recalls to the Sisters that their only care should be to make Jesus and Mary live and reign in their hearts, and that in order to succeed in doing so, they should cultivate with especial solicitude the virtues of purity and charity. A glance at their beautiful Coat of Arms cannot fail to excite within the hearts of the Sisters gratitude towards the Divine King and His Heavenly Queen for the grace of their special vocation.



**M**OTHER MARGARET - FRANCES PATIN, though a Religious of the Visitation, must be regarded as the first Superior of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. This strong paradox came about in this way: Saint John Eudes had enormous difficulties in establishing the Order of Our Lady of Charity. The good were opposed to it and the powers of Hell were enraged against it, so that at one time the little Community was reduced to one novice and one child-postulant. The saintly Founder who loved the Christ-like spirit of Saint Francis de Sales, determined to try to obtain Religious of the Visitation Order to come to the aid of his own. The Bishop of Bayeux, Monsignor de Angennes, very reluctantly gave permission for this and appointed Mother Patin of the Visitation Convent at Caen, as Superior of the Charity. This excellent Religious felt the greatest repugnance to undertake the work, her delicacy of soul shrinking from the task of directing the poor Magdalens. But God enabled her to obey, and under her wise government the little House of Charity began to succeed and prosper. But the rage of Satan at its success was unbounded and the trials to which the Sisters and the Saintly Founder were subject were very great. The friendly Bishop died and was succeeded by one who was altogether opposed to the projects of Saint John Eudes, and extremely biased against him. This was Monsignor Mole. He determined to do away with the Charity as he could not endure the idea that Religious should come into close contact with the Magdalens. At the same time, the nuns of the Visitation of Caen elected Mother Patin as their own Superior (1647), for they were determined that she should have no more to do with the House of Charity with all its sorrows and miseries. The Mother, therefore, went back to the Visitation, taking with her all the best novices and postulants, who were only too glad to follow. Again Father Eudes was left with one courageous novice (Sister Mary of the Assumption de Taillefer) and a few faithful postulants. Always the Community was on the point of being annihilated, yet still survived. The intrepid Founder never gave up hope, and as it seemed by miracle, the Order of Our Lady of Charity was at last firmly established in the Church, on the 8th of February, 1651—the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary which he himself had established! So true is what an old Irish priest said of the Mother of God: "If She's for you, it does not matter who is against you!"

Mother Patin and her Religious were now obliged to return, and it was Our Blessed Lady herself and Saint Francis de Sales who brought this about. Several years afterwards, Mother Patin related the circumstances to her Superior. She says:

"Once, while I was Superior of the Visitation, when I had gone to the Charity to make some changes among the Sisters," (evidently she still endeavoured to look after the little house) "I went according to my devotion to salute the Blessed Virgin, holding the Infant Jesus on her right arm, and in the left hand a bunch of flowers (a work of art). As I cast my eyes on her countenance, she looked at me fixedly; there was anger in her glance and holding out her right arm she said 'You did wrong to my house when you took away the best subjects!' I was so thunderstruck with amazement that I could not remember anything else but that reproach. I prayed God to pardon me and give me the grace of a happy death."

She goes on to say that most of the time that she was Superior of the Visitation and after she was deposed, she suffered from an unfathomable depth of sadness which, re-acting upon her body, made her almost always ill. She implored God to deliver her from this anguish, and one night, when her torments seemed unbearable, she cried out to be delivered from them. Suddenly she saw the Blessed Saint Francis de Sales, clothed in his ordinary garb, who said to her "Yes, you shall have health of body and peace of mind if you desire it—not for yourself, but to render service to Our Lady of Charity." Immediately she recovered her health and her soul was filled with a delicious feeling of peace. She told the vision to no one and her Superior did not send her back to the Charity. As a result, she again became ill—so ill that her life was despaired of. Her Superior then, as a last resource, made a vow to send her back—if God would restore her health. Her recovery followed immediately, and she was thus by Heaven itself, restored to the Charity. She returned in June 1651, taking with her several good Sisters, and she persevered until the end in the noble work of forming the little Community (which rapidly increased) to all the observances of Religious life.

She died in the sweet odour of sanctity in the Convent of our Lady of Charity, Caen, in the year 1668, calling down blessings on the "little House of Charity."

## THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" SISTERS

To avoid a common misunderstanding, it should be noted that there are two religious institutes in the Church doing reformatory and protective work with girls and young women; that of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge, the original Order founded by St. John Eudes in the seventeenth century (to which the Monastery in Edmonton belongs), and that of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, an offshoot of the original institute, founded by St. Euphrasia Pelletier in the nineteenth century. As established by St. John Eudes, the Order was so organized that each house as soon as founded became independent and self-contained, but in 1835 Rome permitted the Superioress of a Monastery of the Order at Angers, Mother Mary of Saint Euphrasia Pelletier, to establish a Generalate in that city and to establish therefrom other houses, all of which would continue to remain dependent on Angers and under the jurisdiction of a Mother-General. Mother Euphrasia argued that such a central administration would make for more ready expansion and greater uniformity of formation and spirit among the Religious. But she absolutely repudiated the suggestion that she was founding a new Order; she was simply extending and developing the one founded by St. John Eudes. To distinguish the houses that owed obedience to the Generalate, it was decided that this new branch of the Order would in future be known as the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers. *Though both institutes are commonly referred to as "Good Shepherd" the name is incorrectly applied to the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge.*





SAINT MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA PELLETIER (1796-1868)  
—Religious of the Order of Our Lady of Charity  
—Foundress of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of  
the Good Shepherd of Angers

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CARDINAL NEWMAN says of this Vocation that it is the nearest approach to the Eternal Priesthood of Christ. And truly it is sublime, having its source in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in that of His Immaculate Mother, Mary. For it is nothing less than the entire consecration of one's life and energies, of one's whole being to the conversion of women who have lost their virtue and their honour.

Someone has well said that the men of a nation are what its women make them, for the great force for good or evil in the world is woman. She is either the guiding star of the home or she is its ruin. How great then must be the vocation of a Religious who, by the influence of her example, by her prayers and by her zeal, succeeds in winning these poor souls for Christ and in re-establishing them in virtue and dignity!

St. John Eudes assures his daughters that "to deliver a soul from the slavery of sin and the devil, is a higher work than to set at liberty all the captives and prisoners on the earth." And, moreover, he declares that this work, i.e., the salvation of souls, "is a work which contains in itself all other good works, corporal and spiritual, which they can do, because other good works are only means to attain this end." (*Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity, 1*)

In order that the Religious of Our Lady of Charity ever keep this, her vocation, before her mind, as the very reason of her existence in the Order, she makes a fourth vow. This obliges her to devote herself to the instruction and salvation of girls and women, who, having fallen into the disorders of a licentious life, shall be received into the Monastery for their conversion. All her talents, all her time, all her activities she offers for this end. Fatigues, disappointments, sufferings of every kind she counts as joys, if by them she can save these dear 'children' from a life of sin. Gladly would she endure death to save even one of them, for she knows that "one soul is of more value than a world, and consequently to help to withdraw a soul from the abyss of sin is a greater thing than to create the whole world." (*Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity, 1*)

See her among her dear charges. To her they are always 'children'; to them she is always 'mother.' Calm, patient, modest and humble, she moves, from morning to night, cheering the sad, subduing the unruly, urging, reproving, praising, teaching as she sees fitting. They, on their part, render her a deep, intuitive reverence. The wildest of them, the most untaught, will be careful not to say or permit an indelicate word in her presence. She is indeed surrounded by those who have—in many cases—tasted the depths of vice, yet she is as a lily amongst them, *and remains as such.*

## THE VOCATION OF A RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY

When the great St. John Eudes had the marvellous courage to establish the Order of Our Lady of Charity, the world held up its hands in horror. "Never," said its partisans, in effect, "never could vice and virtue live in such close proximity. Virtue would be sure to succumb, and vice to conquer." The exact opposite happens, however, as can be seen in so many Monasteries of the Order all the world over. Everywhere within those sheltering walls is virtue triumphant and vice overcome.

Many, very many of these 'children' have suffered at the hands of a hard, unfeeling world. Many too, have never known a mother's love or the sweet joys of a Christian home. Here they find sympathy, kindness, love. Here, for perhaps the first time, they experience the deep influence of that holy atmosphere



which surrounds the lives of those consecrated to Christ. Gradually, a change is effected. Prayer, silence, labor, and the intense devotedness of the 'mothers' suffice, at length, to work a complete transformation in these souls so dear to Christ.

The Religious of Our Lady of Charity draws all the grace she needs for her arduous task, from the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. To these two Hearts she is consecrated. They are her secure refuge, her tower of strength. On her own heart, night and day, she wears Their image. In all the hard and painful things she meets with in this, her glorious vocation, she turns for help to these Sacred Hearts, and They do not fail her.

Among the beautiful wishes and prayers that the Saintly Founder expresses for his beloved daughters, we find the following:

That the year, the day and the hour in which a Sister writes her Vows in this Book, (of the Vows) may be to her a year of mercy and forgiveness of all her sins, a day of blessing and sanctification for soul and body, and an hour of lasting confirmation in God's grace and love.

That the names of those that are written in this Book may be written for all eternity in the Divine Heart of Jesus, the Son of Mary, and of Mary the Mother of Jesus.

And again he says, addressing the same:

Finally, engrave this upon your hearts: that you are the Daughters of the most Holy Heart of the Queen of Heaven. Never forget that beautiful name; keep it ever before your eyes, write it in your spirit, imprint it in the depths of your soul, inscribe it on your hands, carry it in your mouth; that is to say, by the grace of God let all your thoughts and affections, all your words and actions tend to render you worthy Daughters of the most Holy Heart of the Mother of Jesus—tend to please and delight her Heart in every possible way, but especially by keeping with exactitude your Rules and Constitutions, and by paying faithfully to God your Vows, particularly the Fourth Vow, which binds you to occupy yourselves in the conversion and instruction of erring souls.

(Wishes of the Founder. *Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity*)

Such is the Vocation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Charity. May they be ever faithful to it, and, having spent themselves on earth to attain its end, may they be found worthy to spend a glorious Eternity, together with those precious souls whom, by God's grace, they have helped to snatch from Hell.



**a** RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY begins her religious life with a trial period called the Postulancy. At the end of six months, if the postulant is satisfied that she has a genuine call to religious life, and if the Community has determined that she is a suitable candidate, she is permitted to receive the holy habit of a Novice in the Order.

"No one shall be received who does not testify a great desire for Christian perfection and a more than ordinary zeal for the salvation of penitent souls, of which a special profession is made in this Order." (*Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity. III*)

During the postulancy the candidate wears a simple black dress and cape and a small veil (1). The novitiate commences with the taking of the habit. At the beginning of the ceremony of Clothing, the postulant is dressed as a Bride of Christ, symbolic of her sacred espousals. She approaches the altar and stands while the choir sings the *Ave Maris Stella* (2). The celebrant then hands her a blessed candle, symbolic of the celestial light to which Jesus calls her out of the darkness of the world in which she has been living (3). After the Holy Mass the celebrant interrogates the candidate regarding her request for admittance into the Order. He then blesses the religious habit which has been placed on a table near the altar. He hands the habit to the candidate, who receives it with a kiss (4), and proceeds to a near-by room in order to take off her secular dress (5). Re-entering the chapel dressed in the garb of the Order, the candidate again approaches the altar, publicly professes her renunciation of the world and her love of Jesus Christ (6), and then receives from the celebrant a new name. Under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Order, and of a saint or mystery of holy religion, the candidate now enters the period of her Novitiate.

During this period, the young novice's time is judiciously divided into prayer (7), study, and recreation (8). She learns how to recite the Little Office of Our Lady, which is chanted daily in choir by all the Sisters (9). She learns skills useful to her in later years (10). Special instruction is given to aid and inspire her in the apostolate to which she is dedicating her life, the salvation of souls. Above all, the novice is made to realize that her personal holiness will be the measure of her success in winning souls to Christ.

At the conclusion of the two years of Novitiate, the novice again approaches the altar, and in a brief but important ceremony she pronounces her temporary vows. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and before the assembled Community, she signs her profession (11).

The white veil is now exchanged for a black veil, symbolic of her consecration and of her desire to remain hidden from the world (12). At this time also the newly-professed receives a silver heart embossed with the coat-of-arms of the Order, which she wears to symbolize her special consecration to the Mother of God.

For three years more, the Junior Professed pursues the study of the religious state. She considers carefully both the obligations and the privileges of religious life. She is initiated

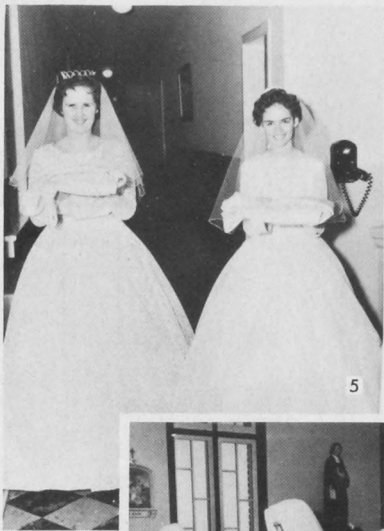




2



3



5



6



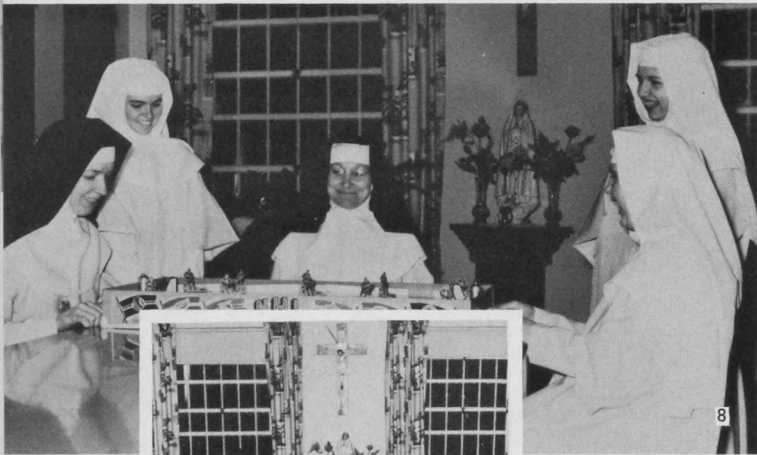
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9



8



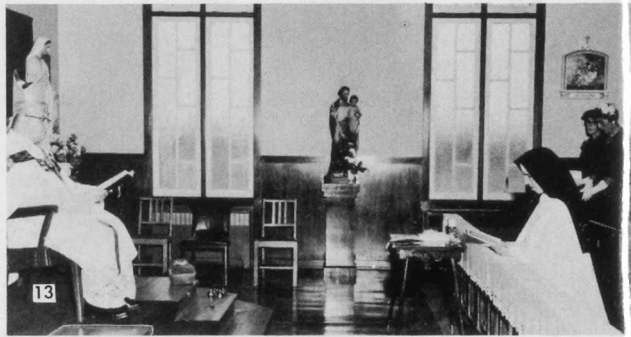
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11



12



13



14





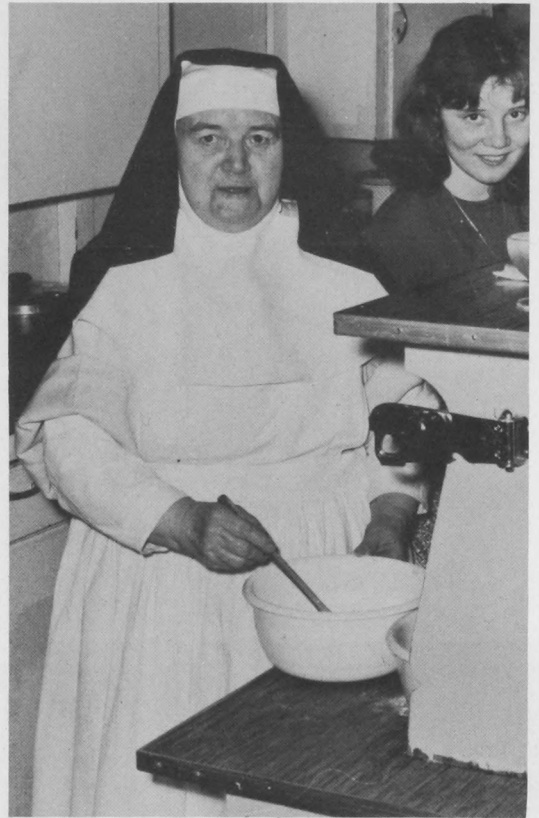
into the apostolate of the Order, working with the girls under the supervision of another Sister. Finally the joyful day of her final profession arrives.

Kneeling before the Bishop (or his representative) she makes profession of her intention to live forever in the House of the Lord and to practice perpetually the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and to labour for the salvation of the girls and women who will be brought to the Monastery (13). In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, of the Bishop, the Community, her family and friends, she signs her vows (14). A crown of flowers is placed on her head (15) while the celebrant prays, "Receive, my Sister, this crown, and live in such a manner, that after having worn it here below, you may merit to be crowned with eternal glory in heaven." The choir responds with the anthem, *Veni, Sponsa Christi*—"Come Spouse of Christ, accept this crown, which the Lord has prepared for you from all eternity."

The professed Sister now prostrates before the altar while the choir sings the Litany of the Saints. At the conclusion of the Litany the Sister rises and accepts from the celebrant a lighted candle, (16) symbolic of Christ, in whose Divine Light she trusts to walk forever in the path of Perfection.



Altar-bread maker



Cook

After her profession of vows the Sister may be assigned to any one of the various duties that are necessary for the efficient administration of a large institution. Each Sister's personal aptitudes are taken into consideration, but all realize that it matters not *what* one does, but *how* and *why* the task is performed. Because of her Fourth Vow, a Sister of Our Lady of Charity has linked her salvation with that of poor fallen souls; whether she be in one charge or another, directly or indirectly employed with souls, her vow remains the same. All duties are equally important in the eyes of God, and the merit of all works is directed toward the purpose of the apostolate, the salvation of souls.



Sacristan



Sacristan





Secretary



Altar-bread maker



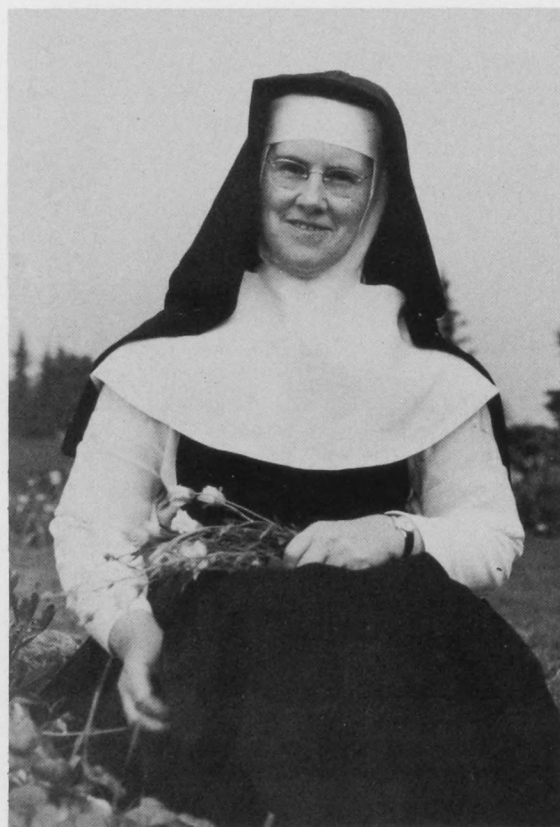
Nurse



Teacher



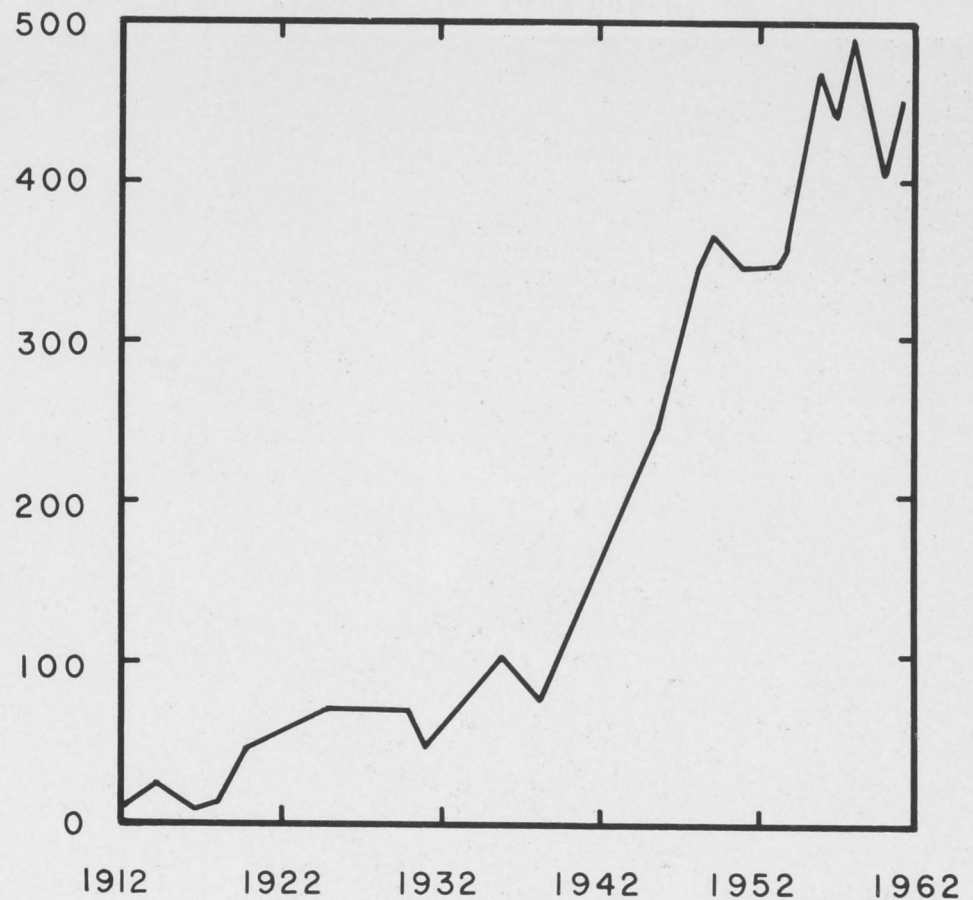
The Sisters appreciate the importance of habitually renewing their spiritual, intellectual, and physical resources in order that they may the better instruct and guide those committed to their care. Several times during each day they withdraw from contact with the girls in order to conciliate a life of prayer and of religious life by participating in the community exercises. A sweet and happy spirit is restored through daily recreation, and in the summertime the Sisters take turns relaxing for a day or two at a near-by lake.





# NUMBER OF GIRLS CARED FOR BY THE SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY DURING THEIR FIFTY YEARS IN EDMONTON.

YEAR	S.J.C.	S.H.C.	O.L.G.C.C.
1912	10		
13	15		
14	24		
15	18		
16	11		
17	9	1	
18	9	3	
19	22	26	
1920	18	25	
21	23	31	
22	18	49	
23	24	35	
24	25	48	
25	24	43	
26	24	42	
27	21	52	
28	25	46	
29	30	30	4
1930	31	33	5
31	12	24	10
32	15	32	13
33	15	36	8
34	12	51	15
35	36	33	21
36	34	49	20
37	40	38	17
38	30	23	21
39	44	42	22
1940	62	45	17
41	60	30	37
42	53	23	47
43	71	28	56
44	64	36	80
45	93	47	109
46	83	59	104
47	95	71	100
48	127	82	135
49	118	89	155
1950	119	73	166
51	118	86	140
52	118	103	123
53	117	131	98
54	178	110	90
55	172	135	147
56	217	184	70
57	235	119	80
58	260	100	133
59	261	98	94
1960	231	91	78
61	301	73	82
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3772</b>	<b>2605</b>	<b>2297</b>

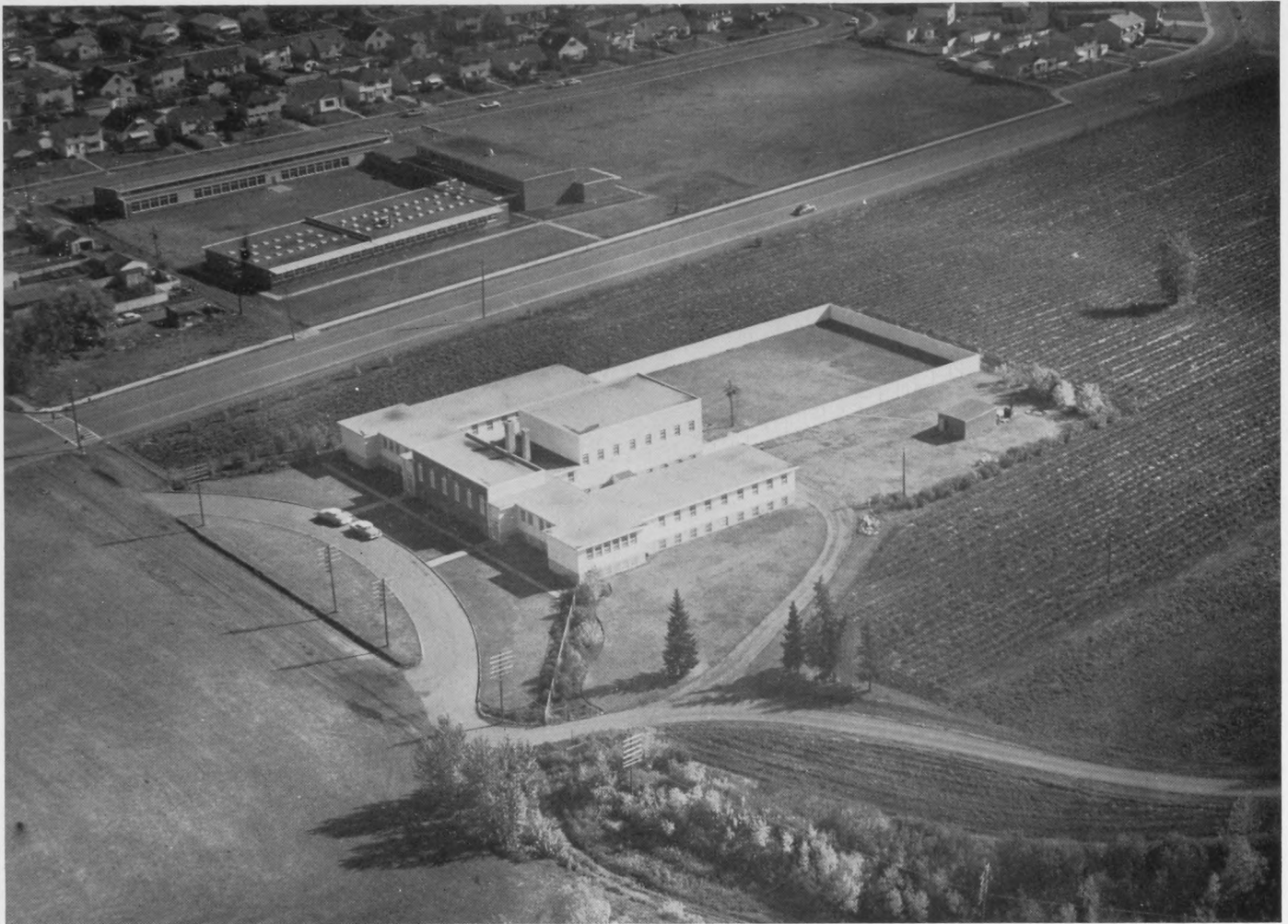


Number of girls indicated on graph includes total of the three divisions



The girls of St. Joseph's Class and Our Lady of Good Counsel Class are in Our Lady of Charity School. The girls of Sacred Heart Class are in O'Connell Institute

## OUR LADY OF CHARITY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



Our Lady of Charity School is a residence-school for girls between the ages of 12 and 18 years who have had difficulty adjusting satisfactorily in their own homes or in society, and who need special training to help them become socially acceptable. The school's objective is to rehabilitate the girls in order to return them to society better equipped to meet its demands and restrictions.

Referrals are made by the Attorney General's Department, the Department of Public Welfare, the Courts, private agencies, and parents. Girls of any race, religion, or cultural background are accepted. Referring agencies are asked to submit a case history and all available medical, psychological and educational reports.

The girls are placed in one of two groups, depending on why they have been sent to the school. A complete physical examination is given on entrance and defects found are corrected if possible. Medical and dental clinics are maintained in the school. If psychiatric treatment is recommended it is given by the attending psychiatrist or at an outside clinic.

Religion is an integral part of the program by means of which the girls grasp their own dignity as children of God and learn their duties and responsibilities to society. Instruction is given periodically by a priest to the Catholics. Clergymen of all denominations are encouraged to visit and instruct those of their respective denominations. Since prayer is an important part of daily living, all are encouraged to participate in it.

The educational program includes regular academic classes from grade seven to grade eleven conducted by the Sisters and lay teachers. Courses by correspondence are also available. An ungraded remedial class is conducted for slow learners, the severely disturbed, and those who have not previously attended school. An excellent physical education program has been offered twice weekly for the last nine years under the expert supervision of Mrs. Jerry Seaman. Instruction in such extra-curricular activities as arts, crafts, dancing, and sports is given by generous volunteers. Outdoor recreation includes softball in summer and skating in winter. A summer camp is conducted for those girls whose behaviour warrants it.



## OUR LADY OF CHARITY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



Recreation rooms



Chapel



Typing class



School room

## OUR LADY OF CHARITY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



Library





Dining room

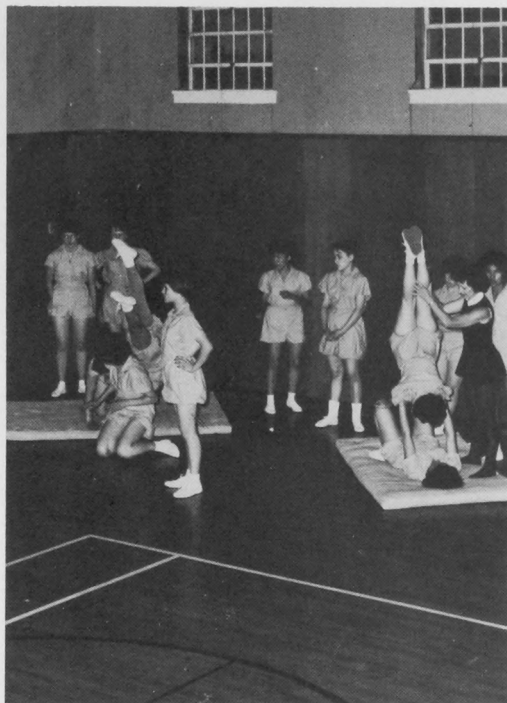


Clinic



Physical education

## OUR LADY OF CHARITY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



Physical education

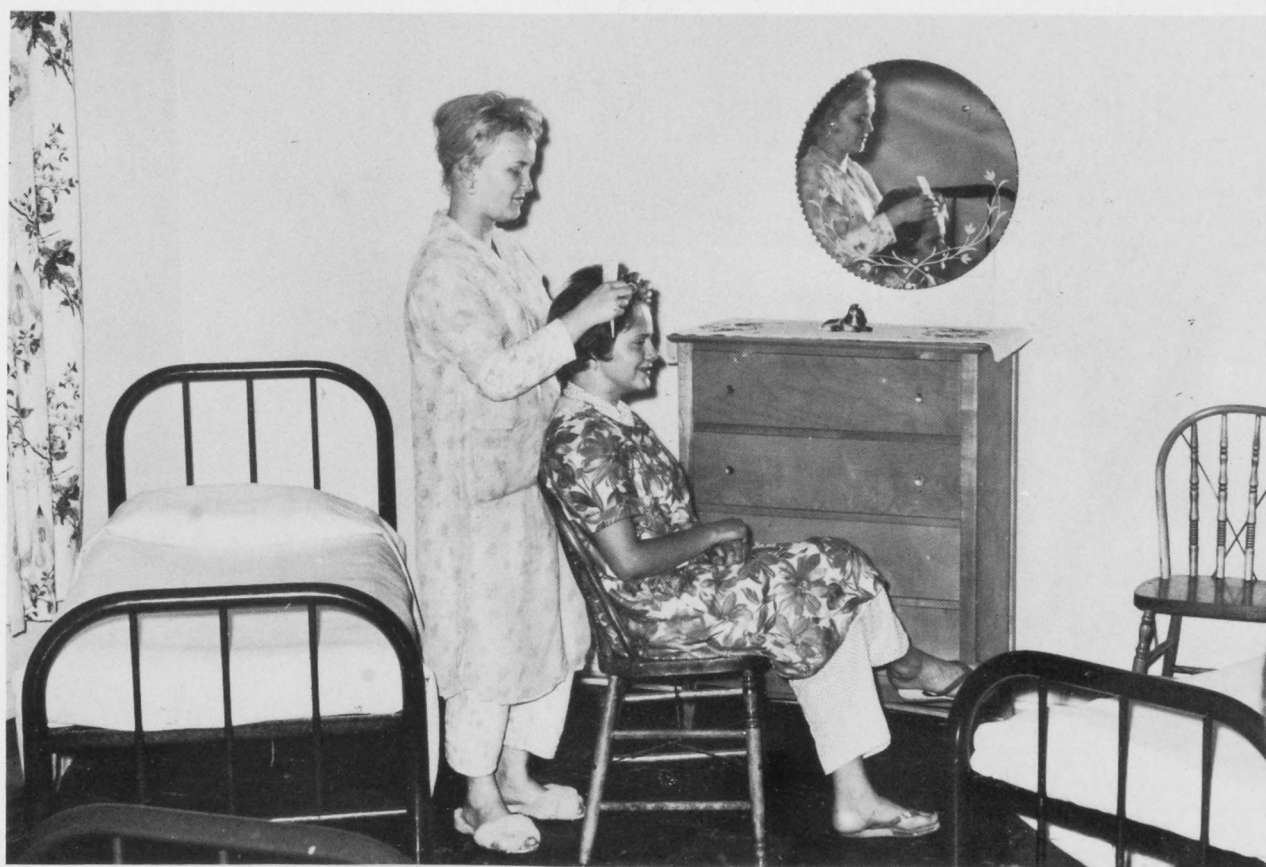


Handicraft





Music room



Dormitory

## OUR LADY OF CHARITY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

## THE O'CONNELL INSTITUTE



The O'Connell Institute is a home for Catholic girls between the ages of 2 and 20 who are in need of a substitute home.







The heated indoor wading pool in the McCuaig wing of the O'Connell Institute is a popular place for the pre-school children for both summer and winter fun.



O'Connell kiddies delight in gigantic Easter Egg given them by CFRN, Easter, 1962

A Valentine's Day party  
for the littlest girls



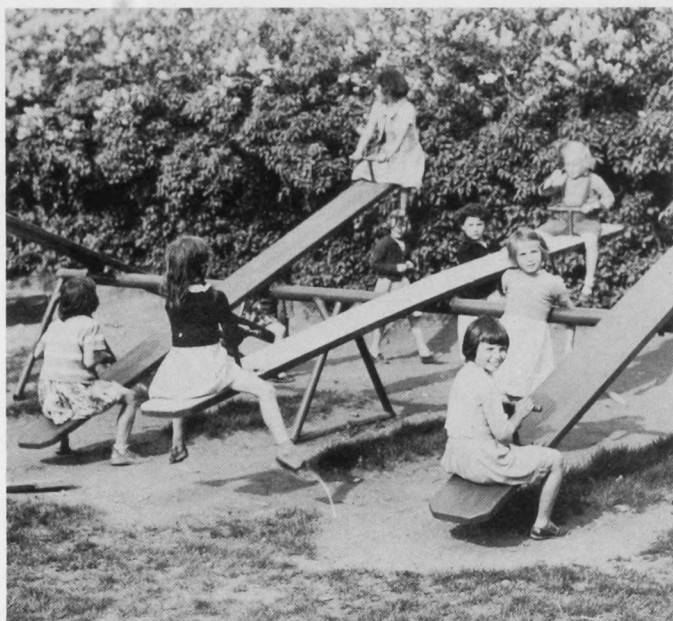
Vigorous outdoor play



Bedtime story hour



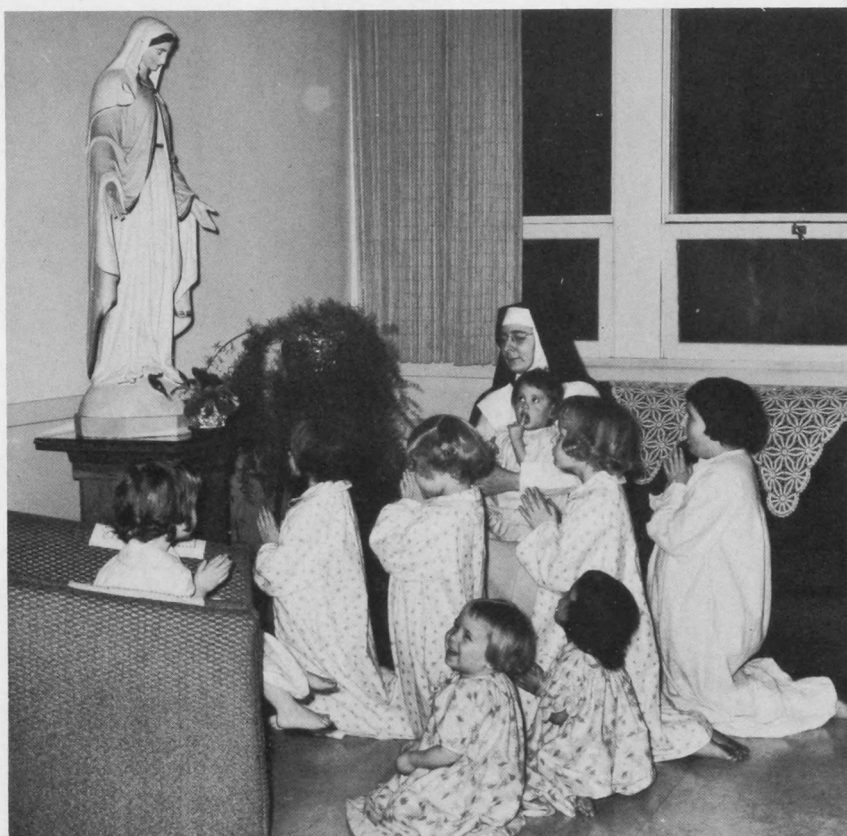
Santa is coming tonight!



Sunny summer fun



## THE O'CONNELL INSTITUTE



Evening prayers



St. Teresa's Separate School serves the needs of the O'Connell children in grades one to six. The older girls attend the local junior and senior high schools.







O'Connell Institute is ideally situated overlooking the North Saskatchewan River and the City of Edmonton

## THE O'CONNELL INSTITUTE

Play School Fun



## AN APPRECIATION

BY ROSEMARY G. GABOURY

With joyous hearts, we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee Year of our dear Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, those grand and noble women, in their beautiful white habits, whose work is known and loved throughout the world.

To add to our happiness, we have our beloved Jubilarian Mother Mary of the Annunciation, as this year also marks the Golden Anniversary of her profession in religion.

Looking back over these fifty years of her dedicated service, we are almost overwhelmed at the magnitude of her accomplishments, her great embracing charity, her noble bearing, her keen sense of humor and above all her great humane gift of understanding.

It would indeed take a whole choir of angels to chant her praises as we should love to hear them sung.

We shall always remember with deep affection, the first Mother Superior, that magnificent woman, Mother Mary of St. Aloysius, who came with Mother Leo and three other Sisters to make their home with us in Edmonton, and to establish the foundation for this great and solid Community.

Their work in dealing as they do with every form of misfortune and tragedy, their loving attitude towards their charges, and their tender arms always outstretched to embrace every helpless little child, demonstrate the very essence of the spirit of Christ.

My memory slips back to the time when I was a student at St. Francis Xavier Academy in Chicago. It was the custom to answer roll call each morning by reciting a verse of the Scriptures. So often, I found myself repeating my favourite verse: "Faith, Hope and Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity."

I feel sure that this beautiful sentiment must be cherished deep in the heart of each one of these beloved Sisters.

With the first little group to arrive in our midst was one white-veiled Novice, Sister Mary of the Annunciation. She was tall and straight and strong, and eager to begin her labour in the vineyard of Our Lord.

She had been born Margaret Mary Nolan in Kilkenny County, Ireland, and at the tender age of not quite seventeen years, she entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Pittsburgh.

To our beloved Mother Annunciation, we offer our gifts of love and devotion and gratitude for her glorious work of over half a century.

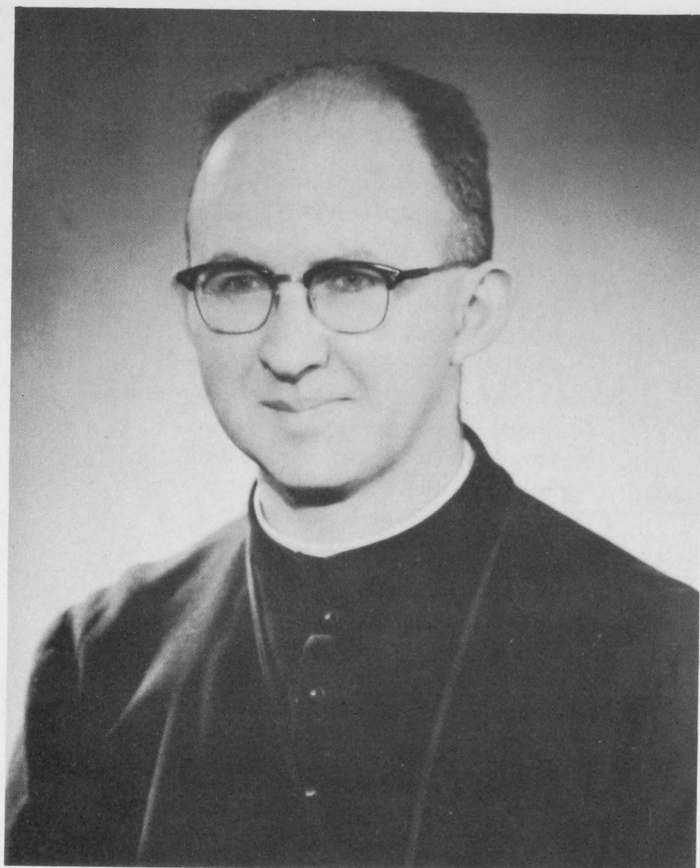
We all know that there will never be another Mother Annunciation and, as there can be only one, we shall be ever thankful that God gave her to us.



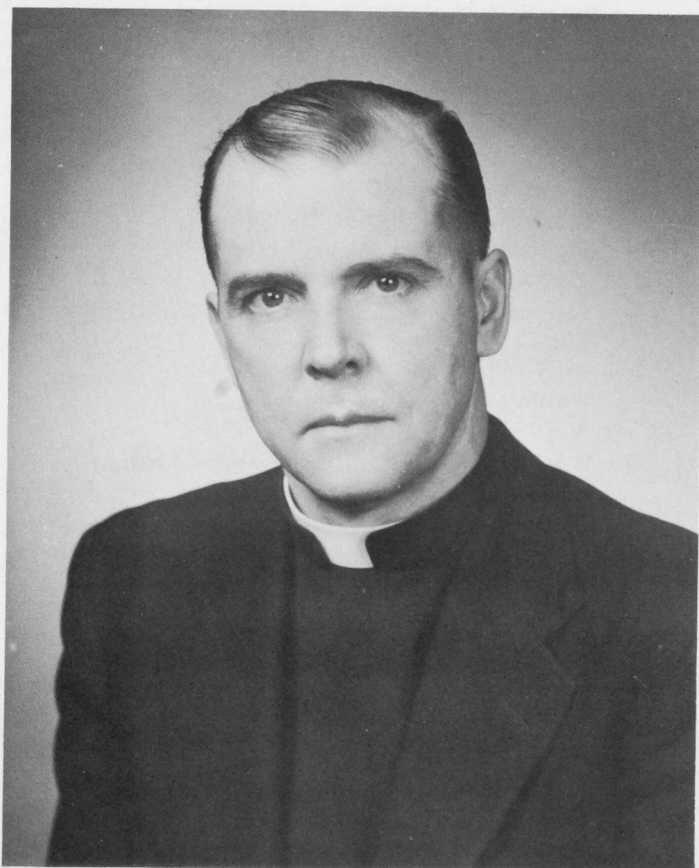
Mother Mary of the Annunciation Nolan  
Superior, 1940-52



## CHAPLAINS



Rev. F. Champagne, O.M.I., Chaplain,  
Our Lady of Charity  
School for Girls



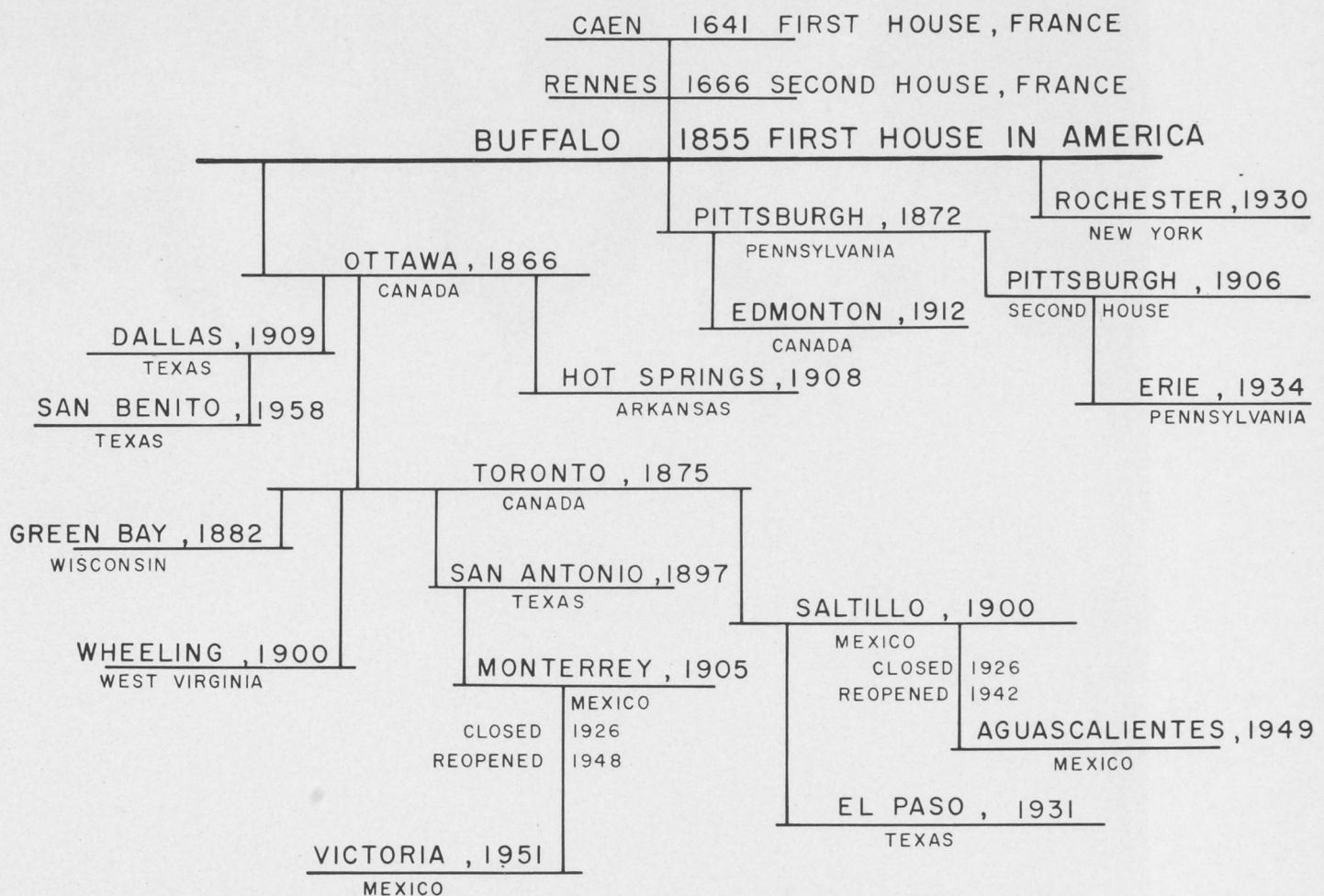
Rev. J. Pomerleau, O.M.I.  
Chaplain, O'Connell Institute

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## SPREAD OF THE ORDER IN AMERICA





**Left to right:**

**Front row:**

Sr. M. of GOOD COUNSEL O'FEE, Clandonald, Alberta  
 Sr. M. of the BLESSED SACRAMENT DEGENNARO, Buffalo, N.Y.  
 Sr. M. of the ANNUNCIATION NOLAN, Kilkenny, Ireland  
 Mother M. of the DIVINE HEART PILON, Edmonton, Alberta, SUPERIOR  
 Sr. M. of the IMMACULATE HEART LABUD, Duluth, Minnesota  
 Sr. M. of St. GERTRUDE DURCH, Lacombe, Alberta  
 Sr. M. of St. JOSEPH FISKE, Tracadie, P.E.I.  
 Sr. M. of St. JOHN EUDES HARTERY, Portugal Cove, Trepassey, Nfld.

**Middle row:**

Sr. M. of St. JOHN OF THE CROSS FEDOR  
 Sr. M. of St. THERESA McLAUGHLIN, Mann  
 Sr. M. of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
 Sr. M. of St. MARIA GORETTI JOHNSON,  
 Sr. M. of St. NICHOLAS KOHLMAN, Ponok  
 Sr. M. of St. STANISLAUS ZENKO, Chipma  
 Sr. M. of St. ANNE POWELL, Mossleigh, A  
 Sr. M. of St. FRANCIS DE SALES MANN, R  
 Sr. M. of St. EUPHRASIA PRENTICE, Sarnia

**Missing from Photo:**

Sr. M. of LOURDES McDONALD, Alexandri  
 Sr. M. of the SEVEN DOLOURS NAULT, Pri



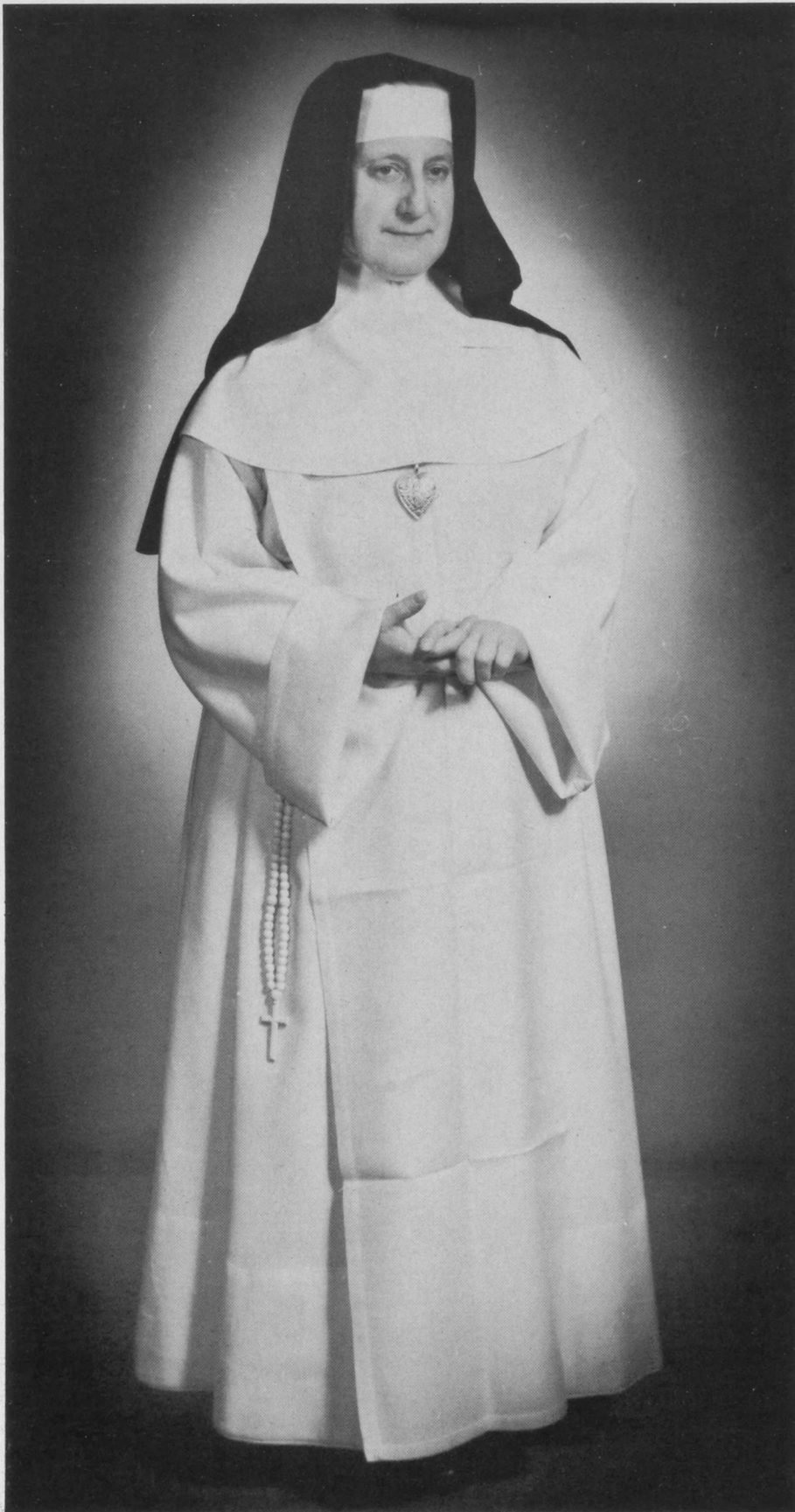
CROSS FEDOR, Lethbridge, Alberta  
 UGHLIN, Mannville, Alberta  
 CONCEPTION MARUSCHEKA, Yorkton, Sask.  
 I JOHNSON, Barrhead, Alberta  
 HLMAN, Ponoka, Alberta  
 ENKO, Chipman, Alberta  
 Mossleigh, Alberta  
 ALES MANN, Regina, Sask.  
 ENTICE, Sarnia, Ontario

LD, Alexandria, Ontario  
 RS NAULT, Prince George, B.C.

**Back row:**

Sr. M. of the NATIVITY HARTERY, Portugal Cove, Trepassey, Nfld.  
 Sr. M. of St. BERNADETTE BARNES, Castor, Alberta  
 Sr. M. of St. MICHAEL McMAHON, St. Paul, Alberta  
 Sr. M. of St. MARY MAGDALENE LYONS, Brandon, Manitoba  
 Sr. M. of St. ANTHONY KELLY, Victoria, B.C.  
 Sr. M. of St. AUGUSTINE HOLLAND, Dublin, Ontario  
 Sr. M. of St. ALOYSIUS GALLIVAN, Calgary, Alberta  
 Sr. M. of the HOLY ROSARY BENEDEK, Olds, Alberta  
 Sr. M. of St. MONICA ALLINOT, Dapp, Alberta





Mother Mary of the Divine Heart Pilon,  
Present Superior

ON THE ELEVENTH DAY of March in the year of Our Lord 1912, two Sisters from our Monastery of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. bid farewell to their country, their Mother-house and to all the dear Sisters with whom they had shared the joys, as well as the toil and labor up to nearly thirty years, to establish a House of the Order in the North West.<sup>1</sup>

So begin the *Annals* of the Community of Our Lady of Charity in Edmonton. We came at the invitation of the Rt. Rev. Emile J. Legal, O.M.I., Bishop of St. Albert, later Archbishop of Edmonton, and at the request of Mr. R. B. Chadwick, Superintendent of Dependent and Delinquent Children of the Government of Alberta. This latter gentleman, responsible for the Province's welfare program, had in 1911 visited various institutions in the United States in order to acquire information about their organization and facilities and thus to provide ideas on which to base Alberta's projected scheme for the care of problem girls. One of the places he visited was the Pittsburg Monastery of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, and so impressed was he that he asked Bishop Legal if it would be possible for these Sisters to start an institution to help with the "Girl Problem" in Alberta. Bishop Legal, in February of 1912, took up the matter with Mother Mary of St. Joseph Harkey, Superior of the Monastery in Pittsburg, and asked to have the Sisters come as soon as possible. The Pittsburg Community, "fearing lest perhaps the North West would not be the most satisfactory, and the distance being nearly three thousand miles, . . . decided to send but two Sisters, and if they found matters satisfactory three more would follow."<sup>2</sup>

The North West was a vast land of prairie, foothill, mountain and river where the Indian and buffalo had roamed freely before the coming of the Whiteman. After the early explorers came the fur traders, the *voyageurs*, the missionaries, the ranchmen and farmers, the railway builders, and then the immense influx of European immigrants. The country made rapid strides in the way of development and progress. Railroads were built in all directions. Towns and cities grew along the rivers and at points on the railways. In 1905 the formal creation of the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan took place. Not long after the organization of the new Provinces, former humble villages were being replaced by big cities. Industries and institutions of all kinds were inaugurated to meet the commercial and social demands of the growing population. By 1912 the population of Alberta had reached nearly 400,000 inhabitants. Superintendent Chadwick, in his 1911 report to the Alberta Legislative Assembly set before it the following need:

The statistics of the Department of Immigration would indicate that almost every country on the face of the earth is represented in the mixture of people that has come to Alberta in the past few years. The average group who have come to this country have come with the idea of bettering conditions, and have introduced problems which have to be faced sooner or later. . . . The tendency of all life to become urban has its effects upon the contributory streams to neglect, delinquency or crime. Urban life, unfortunately, produces bad housing and bad home conditions among the poorer class of

## **History of the Edmonton Monastery of the Order of Our Lady of Charity 1912 - 1962**

<sup>1</sup>*Annals of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Community of Edmonton*, page 7

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

people. Consequently by bad housing conditions an atmosphere of crime and immorality is developed. The young girl, in particular, who comes from the crowded district of the city is beginning to present a problem which must be met in the near future in the Province of Alberta.

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The most pressing needs of the Province at the present time in its work of child saving are: (among others listed)

The establishment of a home for wayward girls or an arrangement with some Eastern or other institution wherein young girls could be provided with the corrective methods of a female reformatory or industrial school, when the need of such treatment arises.<sup>3</sup>

The two Sisters delegated to investigate the possibility of establishing a home for wayward girls in the new Province were Mother Mary of St. Leo Rohner, first Superior of the Edmonton Monastery, and her Assistant, Sister Mary of St. Aloysius Buck. Before they left, the Rt. Rev. Regis Canevin, Bishop of Pittsburg, gave the courageous couple their Obedience and his blessing, and two hundred dollars in aid of the work they were about to undertake.

The journey from Pittsburg to Alberta took the two travellers through Buffalo, New York, where the first foundation of the Order in North America had been made in 1855. Buffalo was also the Motherhouse of the Community of Pittsburg, and so the travellers appreciated the opportunity of spending some hours with Mother Mary of St. Anne Zenner and her Sisters who received them warmly.

There were two Sisters in Buffalo with whom our travellers had a special visit, and to whom they bade a sad and fond farewell. One was the venerable Sister Mary of St. Joseph Shaeffer, who could pride herself on being the first postulant of the Order in America, having entered a few months after the arrival of our first Mothers from France. Mother Leo and Sister Aloysius had both known this dear Mother in the early days of their novitiate, when she had come to Pittsburg to aid the young struggling Community there. Though a few years past her Golden Jubilee, this elderly Sister was well and hearty and eager to wish God's blessing on the new foundation of the Order in far-away Alberta.

The other dear one with whom the travellers had the pleasure of a few fond words was Sister Mary of St. Bartholomew Rohner, sister to Mother Leo. These noble sisters were born in Buffalo of highly respectable and virtuous parents who, like those of the Little Flower, could boast of a family of Religious. Of the five girls given them, three entered the Order of Our Lady of Charity. The parting of these two sisters was no doubt more painful than it had been thirty years previous, and only the Recording Angel could have known the secret sentiments in the heart of Mother Leo as she bade farewell a second time to her family, her friends, her home-town, and her native land.

After leaving Buffalo, the travellers had the pleasure of spending some hours in our Monastery of Toronto, where the

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<sup>3</sup>R. B. Chadwick, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Neglected Children of the Province of Alberta*. Department of Attorney General. 1910-11



Superior and her Sisters received them cordially and gave them fifty dollars towards their new establishment. The generosity of the Sisters in Toronto continued through the years, for when fire destroyed a portion of the Edmonton Monastery in 1916, these compassionate Sisters sent two trunks of much-needed clothing, including habits, to the stricken Community.

The great iron-horse sped the two travellers quickly along the shores of the Great Lakes, through the vast wheatfields of the prairies, and into the foothills of the majestic Rocky Mountains. They arrived in Calgary, Alberta, on the 16th of March and were met by Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Cavanaugh and several other friends who had been former residents of Pittsburg. These good friends greeted them with the then-common pleasantry, "And have you come clean from Pittsburg?" Although it was possible to come direct, it was almost impossible to come "clean" from Pittsburg, industrial city and steel centre of the world, whose sooty skies had caused many an immigrant to wonder if the sun ever shone in America.

Calgary, two hundred miles south of Edmonton, with its blue skies and clear running water and magic Chinook winds, was to afford a welcome rest to the weary travellers for three days, during which time they were kindly received by the Faithful Companions of Jesus at Sacred Heart Convent. The peaceful and lovely location of the convent on the north bank of the Elbow River and the gracious kindness of their hostesses were greatly appreciated by Mother Leo and Sister Aloysius, who were to return to the hospitality of the F.C.J.'s sooner than they had expected.

On the 19th of March, the feast of St. Joseph, our two foundresses came to Edmonton to see His Lordship, Rt. Rev. E. J. Legal, who received them most graciously, and informed them that it was his wish that they should establish the Order in Edmonton. Up to this time the Sisters had believed that their foundation would be located in Calgary, where they had friends already, and where support from the people was assured. But because of the growth in Catholic population, the Holy See had decided to create a new diocese with its Episcopal See in Calgary, and to raise the old See of St. Albert to the dignity of an Archbishopric. As the population of Edmonton had reached at that time nearly 60,000 inhabitants, the Metropolitan See, instead of remaining at St. Albert, was to be transferred to Edmonton, the capital of the Province.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Legal explained that he wished to have our Sisters in his own diocese. The Sisters assented, and prepared themselves to take up residence in Edmonton, their future home.

The little house owned by Bishop Legal which His Lordship intended for the use of the Sisters was, by some delay or misunderstanding of the real estate agent, not yet vacated, and the tired Sisters were required to return to Calgary. They could have remained in Edmonton had it not been that living accommodation was unavailable since people from all parts of the globe were flocking to Edmonton at the time to take advantage of the real estate boom. The two Sisters remained five weeks in Calgary, grateful for the hospitality of the Faithful Companions of Jesus and the kindnesses of the Cavanaughs, who rendered them every possible service. During this time, with His Lordship's permission and the following letter of introduction, the

<sup>4</sup>Emile J. Legal, *History of the Catholic Church in Central Alberta*, page 23

## THE PROBLEM OF THE GIRL

### The Girl in Alberta

The boy problem has become such a common one that it is unusual to speak of the girl problem, but nevertheless the girl problem is just as much in evidence in Alberta as is the boy problem and something should be done at once to meet the pressing need for one or more women who would act in the capacity of probation officers to deal with the peculiar problem which the girl offenders, particularly in the larger centres of population in Alberta.



WOMEN  
PROBATION  
OFFICERS  
NEEDED

### Employed Girls

A great many young girls, that is, girls under eighteen years of age, are employed in the hotels and restaurants of the Province. Possibly in some of these places every effort is made to make the women employees happy and comfortable, and to protect them from coming in contact with the evil side of life. In other places, however, they not only come in contact with conditions of laxity and immorality and hear and take part in conversations which must have an undermining effect on their womanhood, but they are encouraged to use their positions for purposes of making engagements with the male patrons whom they are serving.

### Lack of Home Influence

The majority of these girls have cut loose from home influences, and in all probability in some cases come from homes where crime and immorality are more or less common. The more urban and more complex that life becomes, the greater problem there is to contend with in dealing with the girl in the city.

### Crime Among Girls

It is generally recognized that the majority of crimes among girls are in the nature of sex crimes. As long as vice offers a larger reward than honest effort this condition is bound not only to continue, but to increase until such time as the girl recognizes the dangers to which she is exposing herself.

### Society Dreads Crime in a Boy But Possibly Has Feelings of Greater Dread Of an Immoral Life in a Girl

Possibly most boys over seventeen years of age, who are habitual offenders, have been just as guilty of sex crimes as the girls who are known as "street walkers" and to whose door the sex crime is usually charged, but as consequences are not as immediately nor as glaringly social, society is willing to overlook this condition in the boy or young man. For the girl prevention is the best cure as it is for the boy the kindest course.

It should be remembered that the average girl who is "running wild" is away from the influences of home; that she, as a rule, comes

from a home where immorality and vice are more or less common and in the majority of cases she is compelled to house herself in crowded and unsanitary quarters with others of her kind. As a general rule these girls are stubborn and untractable. They have to be dealt with by women who understand them, and who are experts in that particular work.

If a woman probation officer were appointed, it would be her duty to see that the condition of these girls is improved before they have crossed the line where they are beyond help, and, if in her opinion it is advisable that they should be removed even from their parents, such action should be taken immediately and the girls sent to some good home where everything possible should be done to turn them away from the habits and interests which have sent them wrong in the first place.

It is impossible to accomplish this desirable end until such times as there are appointed one or more women who have had the experience and who can interest the best women of the Province in a movement which would have for its object the provision of social life under normal home conditions, for these girls who have been denied the advantages of home training during their childhood. If anything is to be accomplished for the girls of the street it must be done by women alone who understand the working out of this problem.

### An opening for a Philanthropist

An institution or home of some kind should be provided wherein girls, who in the opinion of the women probation officers, are in danger of becoming a menace to themselves or to society, may be placed under strict discipline, and where they may find the necessary educating influences which have been neglected in their earlier training. Such institution need not be of a large size, but there should be among its departments one of industrial training and one of domestic science, wherein the inmates could learn the principles of household economy and of industry. The institution should be in charge of women of strong enough character to impress upon the girls the dangers of the life to which they are exposing themselves.



Six Children in this Home All Neglected

Pages 26 and 27 of the Report of the Superintendent of Neglected Children to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, 1911, recommending the establishment of a home for wayward girls.



The Most Rev. Emile J. Legal, O.M.I., who invited and welcomed the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity to the Archdiocese of Edmonton in 1912.

two Sisters collected in money and goods nearly nine hundred dollars for their new establishment:

E. J. C.  
at  
N. J.

Evêché de St-Albert

St-Albert, Alta., April 18, 1912.

*The Sisters of Charity of the Refuge are about to commence their work in Edmonton for the rescue and protection of young girls. Everyone contributing to support this noble work, will do a thing pleasing to God almighty, and very useful to the society at large. We hope therefore that the Rev Sisters will meet only with kindness and genuinity.*

*Done at St-Albert: Bishop's House,*

*this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1912.*

*Emile J. Legal*

*our Bishop of St-Albert.*

On the 22nd of April Mother Leo and Sister Aloysius again bade farewell to their kind friends and the good Sisters F.C.J. and left Calgary for Edmonton.

By this time the house was vacated, but it took time, soap, brush and elbow grease to make it habitable, for it was a revelation how some people could live. There had been three families in the apartment. During these days of scrubbing and scouring, the Grey Nuns whose hospital is but two blocks from our little House, gave us hospitality. . . .<sup>5</sup>

In a few days the little house was clean and suitable for Religious to live in, and on the fourth of May the two pioneer Sisters were overjoyed to welcome three more brave souls who had left behind their loved ones and their native lands to cast their nets into unknown waters. The three Sisters designated by the Pittsburg Monastery as possessing the qualities necessary for facing the hardships and sacrifices of the new foundation were Sister Mary of the Nativity Cahill, Sister Mary of the Annunciation Nolan, and Sister Mary of St. Veronica Gomally.

Sister Mary of the Nativity had come from Kilkenny to Pittsburg where she soon established for herself a reputation as a devout Religious with marvelous talent in dealing with the disturbed young women who were entrusted to her care. With maternal solicitude she admonished and encouraged them to turn away from the evil temptations of the world and to seek forgiveness and solace in the Merciful Heart of the good God. To the same God she entrusted the success of her endeavours, and assured that success by the exactitude with which she fulfilled the obligations of her religious life. In Pittsburg she had been supervisor of a large class of girls. The "white-slave" racket was rampant at that time in the eastern cities, and Sister Nativity, through her work with the girls, was able to obtain valuable information which aided in combatting the evil. Her co-operation with police and civil authorities was evidenced by the fact that she was known personally by them and publicly

<sup>5</sup>Annals, op. cit., p. 9

admired for her abilities. In Edmonton she was to take charge of the girls who would be brought to the new Monastery.

As is customary in the Order of Our Lady of Charity, each Monastery that is established receives and keeps the Religious who enter there. This means that the Monastery of a Sister's profession becomes her home and she belongs there. Except under extraordinary circumstances, the Sisters do not leave the house of their entrance. In order, therefore, that every new foundation have at least one Sister who "belongs" to that house, at least one novice is sent to each new establishment. Of the five founding Sisters, Sister Mary of the Annunciation Nolan was the young novice who was to be the first professed Sister of the Edmonton Community.

Tall, energetic, devout, Sister Mary of the Annunciation had come to Pittsburg in 1909 with the intention of devoting her life to laboring in the Lord's vineyard for the salvation of erring souls. In her pious home in Ireland she had heard stories of the many young men and women who had gone to every land and nation to bring their native faith to pagans and infidels, and to minister to the spiritual needs of Irish emigrants all over the world. In the young missions of America great numbers of Irish clergy labored zealously, and at least two of the American hierarchy hailed from Sister Annunciation's native Kilkenny. The Rt. Rev. Phelan, predecessor of the Rt. Rev. R. Canevin as Bishop of Pittsburg, had been instrumental in encouraging Sister Mary of the Nativity Cahill and four of her cousins to come to Our Lady of Charity in Pittsburg. The Rt. Rev. John Ireland, first Archbishop of St. Paul, Minnesota, was born at Burnchurch, County Kilkenny, and his chancellor was Father Richard Cahill, cousin to Sister M. of the Nativity Cahill and brother to Sister M. of St. Ambrose Cahill who was later to play a part in the history of the Edmonton Monastery.

Sister Mary of St. Veronica Gomally who entered the Order in Pittsburg in the rank of a Lay Sister was a native of Philadelphia. To her would be entrusted the household duties in the new Monastery. Unfortunately, however, the change in altitude proved detrimental to the health of this good Sister, and she was obliged to return to Pittsburg within a few months. She was replaced in November by Sister Mary of St. Alphonsus Hood, also a Lay Sister.

Sister Veronica's return trip was made in the company of a lady who was on her way to Winnipeg. As furniture and other goods were cheaper in Winnipeg than in Edmonton, the Sisters took advantage of the fact by giving Sister Veronica an order for goods, including a much-needed wardrobe. The wardrobe order was cancelled, however, when a kind friend heard of their need and presented the Sisters with what was necessary.

The first years in the little house at 296 Hardisty Avenue (now 111th Street) were fraught with difficulties caused by the poverty of the young Community and the bigotry of its opponents. Of the five original foundresses, only Sister Mary of the Annunciation survives to recall the hardships of those times. To her alert mind and lucid memory we owe much of the material gathered for this history. Speaking of those early days she says simply, "We had nothing." Daily the Superior, accompanied by her young novice, set out to beg from the business firms and private homes whatever could be obtained in money or goods. Sometimes they received vegetables or coal or wood, sometimes clothing for the girls or a small donation of money to buy furniture for the house or sacred linens for the chapel. No gift was too small or insignificant to be appreciated; careful record was kept of all that was received, and the donors were remembered gratefully in the Community's prayers. The practice of praying

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA  
SUPERINTENDENT OF DEPENDENT AND DELINQUENT CHILDREN

WHEN REPLYING  
DO NOT WRITE ABOUT MORE THAN  
ONE SUBJECT IN ANY LETTER  
C-B

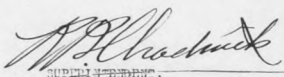
PHONE No. 2083

EDMONTON, April 23, 1912.

To Whom It May Concern:-

This is to certify that the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge are an organization which have come to open up a Branch in Alberta with the idea of dealing with the Girl Problem of the cities of this Province: more particularly the City of Edmonton.

The Sisters of Charity have come to Edmonton on the earnest solicitation of this Department, and I take pleasure in recommending them to the consideration of those who are interested in the Prevention of Crime among girls.

  
J. B. Chadwick



daily for benefactors is a custom in the Order, but surely in times of greater need the gratitude is intensified proportionately.

One of the sorest trials of the young Community was to be without the comfort of the Sacramental Presence in the little Monastery. The Sisters were obliged to go out to the nearest church (St. Joachim's) or to assist at Mass in the chapel of the Misericordia Hospital. Great was their joy when the Vicar General of the diocese, the renowned missionary Rev. H. Leduc, O.M.I., offered the Sisters an altar from the church basement. "But what was our dismay, when our little chapel was in readiness, and we sent for the altar, it had already been disposed of."<sup>6</sup> Between the difficulty of finding a carpenter and for him to make an altar, more time elapsed. It was not until the 15th of June that all was in readiness and the first Holy Mass was celebrated by Bishop Legal. This date, then, is commemorated as the day of founding of the Edmonton Community. "How happy (we are)," writes Mother Leo, "to be again under the same roof with our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. May He bless and aid us to be instrumental in bringing back many souls that have wandered from the fold."<sup>7</sup>

The difficulty of finding a carpenter referred to above indicates another trial which the Sisters were obliged to endure, although in later years they were able to relate it with much amusement. There were taxes and insurance to pay on the house, although the Bishop had given it to the use of the Sisters free of rent and had given them permission to make any repairs or alterations necessary. It was in this little house that the Misericordia Hospital had had its beginning in bygone years, and in which the Oblate Fathers had opened a Juniorate for boys wishing to study for the priesthood. Subsequently it was used as an apartment house. When the Sisters moved in they found that the house consisted of three cottages joined together. This arrangement was convenient as it provided for the complete separation of the Sisters' and girls' quarters in accordance with the requirements of the Constitutions of our Order. However, the house was badly in need of repair. We shall let the Sister Annalist relate the story in her own words:

We found it quite difficult to secure a carpenter, when the Sisters of the Misericordia recommended one who had recently come from Montreal, and whose Sister was a Religious. Without hesitating we engaged him, but to our regret. As none of the Sisters knew the French language, and he knew very little English, and his father and brother who did the work, none at all, which made the work quite difficult. We soon learned, although too late, that they knew very little of the trade, but we had to make the best of it. One of the last repairs was the roof which had many leaks, and this was especially so in the children's refectory. Saturday forenoon, our clever carpenter removed the shingles (no doubt to put on new ones); he went to dinner and never returned. By dawn of Sunday morn there came a heavy rain, and on rising we found the water already gathered in the room, and after Holy Mass it had risen to about six inches, and all day we were wading in water and were kept busy with pail, dustpan, and shovel. Of course the water did not confine itself to the dining room, but found its way through the building. The rain continuing next day, around

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<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13

dinner hour one of the Sisters had an inspiration to cover the roof, which was only a shed, with some old linoleum which we found around the house. Thus rain and all, we managed to get it up, and it proved to be of some little benefit. Some hours later, there came a terrific wind, which carried our linoleum to the middle of the street. Someone from the Misericordia Hospital, just north of us, noticed the predicament we were in, and the good Sisters sent a man over who nailed the linoleum to the roof. The rain ceased the next day. Needless to say we said a fervent *Deo Gratias* when the carpenter had finished his work, which by the way was but half done.<sup>8</sup>

During the latter part of May the first young girl was brought to the care of the Sisters. She was a non-Catholic who, despite her tender years, had already been inoculated with the virus of bigotry against the Catholic faith. It was somewhat of a shock to her to be exposed to the kindness of the Sisters.

Somewhat later, a woman of about thirty-six was brought for protection to the Monastery. Relieved of the unjust persecution of a cousin with whom she had been living and who had slandered her in order to get rid of her, this woman turned her simple soul toward the tenderness of her just God, and lived for many years a most devout and exemplary life in the Monastery.

During a number of years the new Community was subjected to certain trials which we regret to have to mention. A small remnant of that frenzied religious bigotry which had swept through the United States during the middle of the nineteenth century and which is so foreign to the democratic spirit of the West had found its way to Alberta where it remained until replaced by the even more frantic national hatreds cultivated by the political events of 1914-18. Perhaps the sooner examples of religious bigotries are forgotten the sooner the world will witness that unity and harmony amongst Christian peoples so earnestly and universally prayed for in this year of the Ecumenical Council, 1962. We shall pass over, therefore, the discussion of certain obstacles which the Edmonton Community met in its infant years, and record only that one which relates directly to the work of the Order.

When they first arrived in Edmonton, Superintendent Chadwick had informed the Sisters that there were about twenty girls under his Department whom he would be pleased to entrust to their care. A number of these were non-Catholics, and Mr. Chadwick soon met with great opposition to their being placed in a Catholic institution. The opponents of Mr. Chadwick were evidently unaware of the policies adhered to by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, who are scrupulously careful not to meddle with the religious opinions of their non-Catholic children. It is true that stress is laid on the moral training of the girls, which in most cases has been sadly neglected. Religious instruction is given to the Catholics. Chapel services are held every Sunday and several times during the week. Non-Catholics, however, are not obliged to follow services or to attend instructions, but they do attend services when the routine of the program necessitates it. Furthermore, ministers and rabbis are free at all times to visit and counsel non-Catholics.

There is proof in the *Journals* of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta that this policy regarding religion has been faithfully followed since the foundation of the Edmon-



The Pioneer Community—1912

Standing, left to right:

Sister M. of St. Alphonsus Hood  
Sister M. of the Annunciation Nolan  
Sister M. of St. Leo Rohner (Superior, 1912-1917)

Seated:

Sister M. of the Nativity Cahill  
Sister M. of St. Aloysius Buck

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10

ton Community. In the 1914 *Report of the Superintendent of Dependent and Delinquent Children* we find the following:

Both Protestant and Catholic girls have been received by the Sisters, but the Protestant girls have been exempt from attending the religious exercises, and the home is open to any non-Catholic minister or visitor who is interested in these girls, and wishes to see them.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1913 *Annual Report* we find the early traces of an accusation which the Order has continually to face, and which has in past and present years been repeatedly fabricated by girls who find little else to complain of during their stay in the institute:

In the case of the Sisters of the Home of Refuge, Protestant girls have been sent here, and the Home is open to be visited by ministers of any faith, that there be no possibility of any girl making the complaint that she is not having religious training in her own faith. Statements that this condition has existed have been made, but a complete investigation has brought out the acknowledgment, even from the girls themselves who made the statements, that they were made in order that the girls might get out of the institution.<sup>10</sup>

There are occasionally interesting sequels to events of former years. Two years ago, at the annual Lilac Tea held at O'Connell Institute, a mature woman sought out Sister Mary of the Annunciation and confessed to her the lies she had been guilty of nearly a half century previous. She had been committed to the institution amongst the first of those who were received in 1912. After running away, she spread malicious tales which were the cause of much grief and trouble to the Sisters. Forty-eight years later she returned to apologize to the Sisters she had injured and to the institution she had come to admire for its understanding forbearance of thoughtless teen-agers.

Before continuing our narrative, let us repeat here one homely anecdote which the Sisters have recorded as an example of the mistrust with which they were surrounded:

Our second door neighbor Mr. F. is suspicioning us, and wondering what kind of people we are; is watching who comes and goes in the evening. No doubt he'll soon tire of acting spy.<sup>11</sup>

The Sisters had other reminders that they had left behind those who knew and loved them to come and live amongst strangers. The following short notation for July 1, 1912, hints that memories of home were sometimes tinged with nostalgia:

This is Dominion Day, and since we are in Canada, we shall do as Canada does, and make it pleasant for the few children we have. We will nevertheless be loyal to the stars and stripes, to our own dear country.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>R. B. Chadwick, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Dependent and Delinquent Children*. Alberta. Department of Attorney General. 1914

<sup>10</sup>R. B. Chadwick, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Dependent and Delinquent Children*. Alberta. Department of Attorney General. 1913

<sup>11</sup>*Annals, op. cit.*, p. 14

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13



No doubt the fact that we were founded from the United States explains why both July 1st and July 4th are traditionally celebrated as holidays in our Edmonton Monastery.

The first retreat for the new Community began on August 17, 1912. The retreat master was a young priest from France who preached for the first time in English. After the solid and lengthy discourses to which the Sisters had been accustomed in Pittsburg, the short instructions were somewhat of a disappointment. Nevertheless, the retreat was beneficial in renewing both the physical and spiritual energies of the Sisters which had been expended on the establishment of the new foundation.

Because of the retreat, the feast of our Holy Founder, August 19th, was celebrated in silence. The retreat closed on the eve of the 24th, and on the next morning Bishop Legal celebrated Mass, after which Sister Mary of the Annunciation made her holy Profession. Bishop Legal received her vows, assisted by the venerable missionary, Father H. Leduc, O.M.I.

The tiny sanctuary was too small to hold the pastor, confessor, and retreat master, who also attended the ceremony, and the tall young novice had difficulty finding room to prostrate in the aisle of the little room that served as chapel. How different from the impressive ceremonies witnessed in the spacious chapel of the Motherhouse! Yet the aura of pious joy that marked the day was unspoiled by the poverty that still characterized the Community. Rich in that charity which is forgetful of self, the Sisters had already begun to share their meager goods with those less fortunate than themselves. Had not the novice's new shoes, brought with her from Pittsburg and carefully stored away for the great day of her Profession, been given away before the ceremony to one in greater need? Thus Sister Annunciation was to be found the evening before her profession of vows, blacking those shoes which she had worn daily when working in the garden or when tramping the streets to solicit alms.

Far from her family and the friends of her childhood, Sister Annunciation pronounced before the tabernacle of her Dearly Beloved those vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and zeal for souls which she was destined to observe so faithfully and so well for the long years of her fruitful life. Sister Annunciation's years in religion run parallel to those of the development of the Order in Edmonton, and just as the Community celebrates this year, 1962, the Golden Jubilee of its founding, so Sister Annunciation celebrates fifty years of untiring, generous labor for souls as a Sister of Our Lady of Charity.

On the 20th of October, feast of the Sacred Heart established by St. John Eudes, the Sisters were grateful to be permitted exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel; nevertheless, they experienced a feeling of loneliness, for they missed the great solemnity with which their patronal feast is ordinarily celebrated.

Christmas, too, was a lonely time, celebrated for the first time away from the Motherhouse. There were, however, letters and parcels from Pittsburg, and gifts of money from a number of the parishioners of St. Joachim's, where the kindly pastor had exhorted his people not to forget the poor, and had put before them especially the needs of the little Community.

The end of the year 1912 witnessed a burst in the real estate bubble which seriously affected the plans of the Community for future expansion. From the beginning, the little house on Hardisty Avenue had been considered a temporary dwelling, inadequate for the work which the Community hoped to do. Search had been made for a suitable site on which to build an adequate Monastery with facilities conducive both to the religious life of the Sisters and the educational training of their

charges. A tract of land near the proposed Jesuit College, where the Charles Camsell Indian Hospital now stands, appeared to meet the requirements, and a grant was requested from the City to enable the Sisters to buy. Through the influence of some of the Sisters' opponents, the grant was refused. The aid of friends was then solicited, and a subscription was promised. However, with the boom over, many who had buried their wealth in real estate lost it, with very little hope of ever recovering anything. The Sisters, therefore, had to give up for the time being their plans of building.

In spite of their limited facilities, the young Community was energetic in the zealous work entrusted to them, and before they had completed a year in Edmonton, they received from the Provincial Welfare Department the following laudatory report:

The Sisters of the Home of the Refuge of the Good Shepherd in Edmonton, a branch of the mother Society of Pittsburg, have built up an Industrial School for girls at Edmonton, and at the present time are taking care of some twenty girls who have been committed to their Institution. . . . This organization is held to be the most successful on the American Continent today, their work in Pittsburg being recognized as pre-eminently the leading work of this nature on the continent. Their methods are based on common sense, and the excellent work which they have done since coming to Alberta cannot be too highly commended.<sup>13</sup>

At the conclusion of the following years, the satisfaction of the Welfare Department with the efforts of the Sisters was again expressed, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The work which they have been doing is beyond estimation, and they have succeeded in redeeming a great many girls to the community, who would otherwise be on the streets.<sup>14</sup>

This institution is particularly handicapped owing to lack of accommodation, but in view of the accommodation the amount of work accomplished is marvellous, and the Sisters are to be complimented on their achievement. . . . The girls in this institution are taught sewing, housekeeping, laundry, dressmaking and millinery, in addition to school work. . . .<sup>15</sup>

The winter of 1912-13 was a particularly severe one, and the Sisters suffered much from the cold, dry climate. Donations of wood and coal were received gratefully. During the following summer the Sisters went further afield in their solicitation of alms. They visited out-of-town construction camps where they were always kindly received. Nevertheless, this type of collecting required much courage, for coupled with the humiliation of begging were the problems of transportation and the uncertainty of obtaining accommodation in the country.

In 1914 war broke out in Europe and Canada was soon involved in the conflict. The Sisters' thoughts naturally flew to France where so many of the houses of our Order were in close

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<sup>13</sup>*Annual Report of the Superintendent of Dependent and Delinquent Children.* Alberta. Department of Attorney General. 1912

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 1913

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 1914

proximity to the scene of conflict. As the days passed the horrors of war were brought nearer to the little Monastery as visitors called requesting prayers for their loved ones in the Army.

Coincident with the outbreak of war was the death of the beloved Pope Pius X, who had in 1909 beatified our Holy Founder and bestowed upon him the title of "Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary." This saintly Pontiff had done his utmost to avert the tragedy of war,

but the leaders of nations, blinded by greed, turned a deaf ear to his pleas. The death of His Holiness shortly after the outbreak of War made us realize how keenly he felt the anguish of seeing so many of his children destroyed in the bloody conflict, and one felt that his fatherly heart was broken as he saw the ravages wrought by the Spirit of Darkness. We owed much to the gentle Pope Pius X, who will always be remembered as the Pope of the Eucharist.<sup>16</sup>

During the war, new social problems arose, but the effect on delinquency in Alberta was not as noticeable as many social workers had expected. This is a tribute to the unselfish patriotism and devotion of anxious mothers, who cared for their children and wonderingly waited for news from the front.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the problem of female delinquency in Alberta underwent considerable study by the Welfare Department, which issued the following report in 1914:

Improperly supervised dance halls and carelessly managed rooming houses lend themselves to the schemes of the designing man, and are immediately responsible for the downfall of many a young girl. Back of this, however, is the fact that some girls who are compelled to leave their homes early in life to make their own living, have never been advised concerning the dangers that await them. When you know the history of these unfortunates, you are not surprised that they become the easy victims of the moral lepers to be found in every community.

Some parents are unbelievably lax in the supervision which they exercise over their girls. Girls who should be at home playing with their mothers' apron strings are allowed to walk the streets in company with young men concerning whose characters their mothers know nothing.<sup>18</sup>

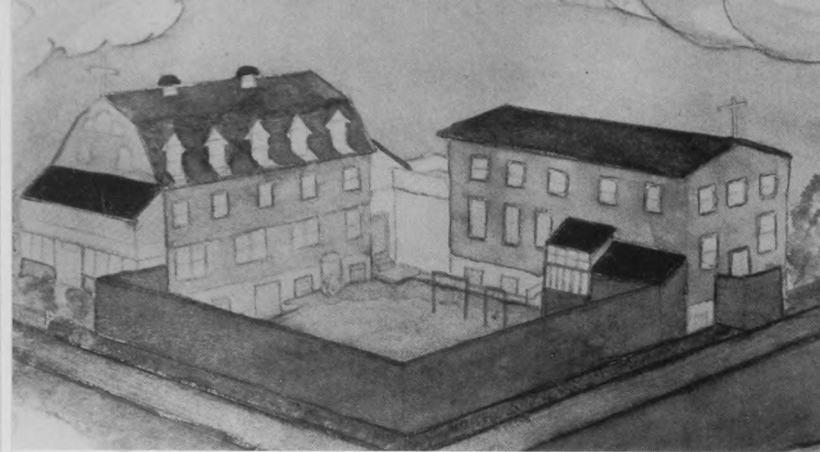
Fire in October of 1916 brought dismay to the struggling Community. Though none of the Sisters or girls was injured, the damage done to the building and the loss of bedding, furniture, and clothes were considerable. The kind Sisters of the Misericordia Hospital gave accommodation to both the Sisters and their charges while repairs were being made. The fire proved to be a blessing in disguise, for it was decided to enlarge the building at the same time that the damage was being repaired. Thus the girls' sleeping quarters were made more ample and a classroom was added. The Sisters of our Monasteries in Pittsburgh and Toronto and many kind friends and neighbors came

<sup>16</sup>*Annals, op. cit.*, p. 22

<sup>17</sup>*cf. Annual Report of the Superintendent of Neglected Children of the Province of Alberta.* Department of Attorney General. 1916

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 1914





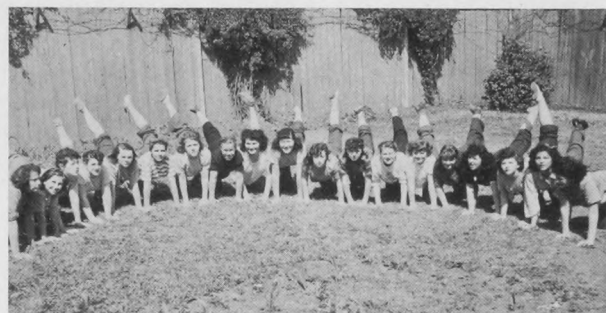
Sketch of the Monastery on 96th Street by one of the girls



St. Teresa's School began at 96th Street in 1921 with Sr. Mary of the Blessed Sacrament as principal



Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, 11409 - 96th Street  
Our home from 1918 to 1951



Physical training in the girls' yard—delinquent group



In the Monastery garden (Sisters' yard)



Recreation on the Sisters' veranda



Mother Aloysius with group of younger children who later moved to O'Connell Institute

## MEMORIES OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY MONASTERY, 96th STREET

to the aid of the Community by providing goods and money to compensate for the losses sustained and the extra expenses incurred.

In 1917 the Rev. J. P. Reynolds, O.M.I., was instrumental in placing before the Catholic Women's League of Edmonton the Sisters' great need of a building adequate and suitable for the work of the Order. Through his efforts a committee was formed which pledged itself to the raising of funds by means of socials, card parties, tag days, concerts, etc. The group took the name of "Auxiliary of Our Lady of Charity." Mrs. Edward Underwood was elected first President, and after many years of valuable service was succeeded by Mrs. E. N. Kennedy. The President at the present time is Mrs. P. R. Gaboury, longtime friend and benefactor of the Community.

Through the years since its inception, and right to the present day, the Auxiliary of Our Lady of Charity has been of invaluable assistance to the Order in Edmonton. Many generous women have given unsparingly of their time and talents to guarantee the success of the Auxiliary's many undertakings. The best known project in recent years has been the annual Lilac Tea held each Spring at the O'Connell Institute. This year, 1962, a Golden Jubilee Tea, convened by Mrs. Gaboury, was held in lieu of the Lilac Tea. The occasion provided an opportunity for the Sisters to welcome again many people who through the years have been kind and faithful friends to the Community.

The monies collected by the Auxiliary were allocated to the building fund, and the Sisters continued to solicit alms for the general maintenance of the Institute. One day in the Fall of 1918, while collecting in the Norwood district of Edmonton, the Sisters heard of a large building for sale, and considered the possibility of its being suitable for their work. The property, formerly the Gospel Mission of All Nations, consisted of a church and residence or rooming house on the corner of 96th Street and 114th Avenue. Mr. Tom Ducey, a trusted friend and advisor, investigated the building for the Sisters and found it in fairly good condition. With some little alteration it could be made suitable for our work. In order to purchase the property it was necessary for the Community to obtain a loan. On September 24th, feast of Our Lady of Mercy, the deal was closed and plans for moving quickly began to materialize.

On November 11th, 1918, the Armistice was signed, bringing happiness and relief to a war-ravaged world, but the terrible epidemic of influenza followed swiftly on the heels of the war. On December 19th the Sisters and girls moved from Hardisty Avenue to their new location on 96th Street. No sooner had they become settled than the dreaded flu broke out in Edmonton. Churches and public places had to be closed. Two of the Sisters and a number of the girls became ill. Sister Mary of St. Alphonsus, who had spared herself no effort during the busy days of moving, became so ill that she had to be rushed to the Misericordia Hospital where she passed away in the early hours of Christmas morning.

How solemn is the first death in a Community, and how great is the void left in the daily lives of those who remain! Sister Mary of St. Alphonsus Hood was born in Blairsville, Pennsylvania, of most respectable parents. In 1880 she had solicited ardently to be received into the Pittsburg Monastery. As a novice she was remarkable for her refinement and modest piety, but before her profession her health declined and the doctor pronounced her case tubercular. She was on the point of being sent away when she begged to be professed as a Lay Sister. Strange to say, she recovered almost immediately. Henceforth her life was one of trial and sacrifice. In 1912 she had been



Mrs. P. R. Gaboury, President of the Auxiliary of Our Lady of Charity

sent to Edmonton to replace Sr. Mary of St. Veronica. During the six years of her stay in the newly-established Monastery she led a life of continuous self-immolation and heroic virtue. She overtaxed her strength during the arduous days of packing and moving and a heart attack made her susceptible to the flu which quickly claimed her life. When she learned she was dangerously ill she assured the Sisters, "If I die I shall offer my life for the success of our little foundation, and surely God will send you help." This holy soul breathed her last during the Elevation of the Host at the third Mass on Christmas morn, December 25, 1918.

The aid which Sister Alphonsus promised to her Sisters was not long in coming. Early in January of 1919 three Sisters from Pittsburg generously volunteered to give their assistance to the struggling Community, at least for a while. One of these, Sister Mary of St. Agatha Beidler, elected to remain in Edmonton, and spent a lifetime of labor and suffering here until her death in 1951.

The Community wholeheartedly welcomed the volunteers, for it was indeed in need of help. Sister Mary of the Nativity Cahill had been stricken with facial paralysis in November of 1917 and had been ordered by the doctors to return to Pittsburg. Sr. Alphonsus' death left the number of Sisters at three by Christmas of 1918, and at that time two of them were ill with the flu. Sister Mary of St. Aloysius was left as cook, housekeeper, nurse and janitor as well as supervisor of the girls. During the epidemic doctors and nurses were scarce, but God in His merciful goodness had pity on the desperate plight of the little band and sent to their rescue Sister M. Monica, a Sister of Providence of Kingston. Sister Monica remained for nine days and the recovery of both Sisters and girls was due in large measure to her skillful nursing.

After their recovery the Sisters plied scrub brushes and paint brushes to their new home, and by February all was in readiness for the formal opening. The following is a newspaper account of the official opening of the new Monastery on February 21st, 1919:

Considering the cold there was a surprising number of people who attended the opening of the Refuge for Girls at 11409 - 96th Street on Friday afternoon. His Honor Lieut.-Gov. Brett was present, and His Grace Archbishop Legal presided at the impressive ceremony. Over 300 responded to the invitations sent to them for the affair by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity and the ladies of the Auxiliary Aid. Mrs. Edward Underwood, who had been deeply interested in the work ever since it began in Edmonton, read an excellent and comprehensive report of the work accomplished since the Refuge had been opened. . . . His Grace made a very excellent speech, outlining the work which had been undertaken in Edmonton, and which had begun in the Church 300 years ago. His Honor congratulated those who were responsible for the efforts which had culminated in the well equipped building and praiseworthy charity. His Worship the Mayor, A. M. McDonald and A. G. Browning also spoke to the assemblage. After the speeches the people were shown through the building and afternoon tea was served. Everyone was struck with the fine condition of the up-to-date home, being thoroughly sanitary and having the best possible heating system. Six Sisters are in charge, one of whom is a trained nurse, and the others excellent teachers who can train the women and



girls in almost every branch of usefulness. Two large class rooms and a library are among the acquisitions. Presiding at the tea table were Mrs. Heffernan, Mrs. J. K. Cornwall, Mrs. Cashman, Mrs. Ducey, Mrs. O'Neill, Mrs. Gavin, Mrs. E. J. Mahar. The parishes were well represented by a large attendance of the priests.

It was during the flu epidemic that the Sisters first gave refuge to little children, a work which eventually led to the opening of the O'Connell Institute. It happened that a young woman, after the birth of her second child, found herself a widow when she was ready to leave the hospital, her husband having been claimed by the flu. Being a newcomer to Edmonton and having no relatives in Canada, she came to the Monastery and begged the Sisters to shelter her little ones while she sought employment for their support. With true Christian charity the Sisters welcomed the children, and it was not long before other children were brought to the care and protection of the Sisters by parents whose partners had fallen victims to the plague.

In the years which followed World War I pressing economic conditions were responsible for an increase in the number of orphaned and neglected children accepted by the Sisters. The post-war period was characterized by constant rise in the cost of necessities with no wage increase for the people, or one altogether incommensurable with the soaring price of living. Hardship necessarily followed, and the number of poor increased daily. Parents were compelled to buy food that was not nourishing and to clothe their children in garments insufficient or unsuited to winter climates. Families had no reserve to fall back on in the case of sickness, and parents were simply forced to deprive their children of the ordinary necessities. Many in desperation turned to the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, begging them to accept their children into the Monastery. The Sisters found it difficult to ignore the pleas of these poor people, and placing all their trust in Divine Providence, undertook to provide for the unfortunate little ones.

For a while the children were housed in the Sisters' quarters; beds were taken down after breakfast so that dormitories could be used as playrooms during the day. In the early part of 1921 a number of business men of the city visited the Monastery, and noting the overcrowded conditions, resolved to collect funds in order to transform the vacant attached church into a suitable home for the younger children. These kind-hearted men<sup>19</sup> were successful in raising \$6,000.00 and under their supervision the one-roomed church was changed into comfortable quarters. A second story was added to the building and the rooms partitioned. By September of 1921 twenty little ones were able to take possession of their new home. These younger children now had separate quarters and facilities from the older group. Only the chapel was shared in common.

The educational needs of the children had also to be provided for, and in September of 1921 an elementary school was established. This was the beginning of St. Teresa's School now located near the O'Connell Institute. From 1921 on, grades one to seven were taught at 96th Street, while girls in the higher grades attended Sacred Heart School and St. Mary's High. During many years school supplies were provided to numerous needy children through the generosity of Mr. A. A. O'Brien, Superintendent of the Separate School Board.

As economic conditions worsened, the number of children admitted because of unfortunate home circumstances increased.

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<sup>19</sup> Messrs. D. Conroy, J. W. Heffernan, E. N. Kennedy, J. J. Murray

By 1927 there were 84 children in a group separate and distinct from the delinquents, who numbered 35. The mortgage on the Monastery at 96th Street had not yet been paid off, and there seemed to be little possibility of expansion. During these years laundry was taken in and fancy work and altar breads sold; these provided but meagre revenue. The Sisters had to rely on the charity of benefactors, both Catholic and non-Catholic, for they were receiving no income for the greater number of the children admitted. Few families could afford to pay board for their children, and many days passed when a token offering of vegetables was all the Sisters received for clothing, feeding, and educating a single little one or a whole family.

It is difficult for the Community to express adequately its heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals and organizations whose generosity and benevolence made it possible for the Sisters to continue their work for souls during those trying early years. The paternal solicitude of Archbishop Legal was ever an incentive to the Sisters in their daily trials, and his personal visits were a highlight in their lives. He often came to celebrate Holy Mass, to exhort by his fatherly counsel, or to encourage by his genial disposition. Frequently he brought a gift for the chapel, and the beautiful gold monstrance which he presented in 1912 to the initial Community on 111th Street is still used with reverent pride at O'Connell Institute.

Next to Archbishop Legal must be mentioned all those of the clergy, regular and secular, who attended to the spiritual needs of the Sisters and their girls. While on Hardisty Avenue, the Oblate Fathers did all in their power both spiritually and materially to aid the infant Community in becoming firmly established. When the Monastery on 96th Street was opened, the Rt. Rev. M. Pilon and later the Rt. Rev. M. J. O'Gorman and all the priests of Sacred Heart Church looked after the spiritual needs of the Sisters. The Jesuits, Franciscans, and Redemptorists were called upon to preach conferences and retreats. The secular clergy throughout the city and in the country parishes welcomed the Sisters when they went collecting and encouraged their parishioners to give generously so that the work of the Order might be carried on. The various religious congregations of women were unfailingly generous in their aid. For many years the Sisters of the Misericordia Hospital asked no recompense for the care they gave to any of our Sisters who required hospitalization.

During these early years, too, the services of a number of doctors were given freely both to the Sisters and the girls. Among others, one who should be mentioned is Dr. J. J. McDonnell. Not to him alone, but to all who were called upon for medical services, are the Sisters deeply grateful.

Police and Welfare officials were always kind and co-operative. The Superintendent of Neglected Children, Mr. R. B. Chadwick, though a non-Catholic, had proved himself one of the staunchest friends of the Sisters, and his sudden death in 1915 was keenly felt by the Community.

The Auxiliary of Our Lady of Charity, together with the Catholic Women's League, continued their indispensable work, for these generous women had pledged themselves responsible for the debt contracted when the 96th Street property was purchased.

Particularly during the Christmas season did the people of Edmonton testify their generosity. The ladies of the Pastime Club, an organization of Catholic women, mostly teachers, held yearly parties for the children. Messrs. E. N. Kennedy, D. Conroy, C. Hepburn, J. J. Murray, and J. W. Heffernan yearly supplied Christmas dinner for the orphans, and they, together

with their good wives, personally served it to the children. The Catholic Women's League, the Knights of Columbus, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Kiwanis Club, the Gaiety Club, the Norwood Community League; all added to the Christmas cheer.

Unfortunately, the limited scope of this narrative does not permit individual listing of all those who might be mentioned as early benefactors of the Community, but to each and every one the Sisters are forever grateful, and ask God's blessing on their generosity.

Archbishop Legal, beloved friend of the Community, died in 1920 and was succeeded in the same year by the Most Rev. H. J. O'Leary, who proved himself to be equally kind and fatherly. In 1927 Archbishop O'Leary introduced to the Community Mr. J. D. O'Connell, a wealthy philanthropist who had already earned for himself the appellation of "The Orphan's Friend." Mr. O'Connell was visiting a boyhood friend from the Maritimes, and while in Edmonton held a picnic for all orphans of the city. His friend, Frank Leger of the postal service, suggested to him that more enduring good could be done for unfortunate children than giving them picnics, peanuts, and pennies. The next day Archbishop O'Leary brought Mr. O'Connell to our Monastery and impressed upon him the crowded conditions and the great need of larger quarters, particularly for the younger children. Mr. O'Connell's heart was touched, and he offered to donate money to purchase the H. J. Dawson estate near the outskirts of the city. Negotiations began and by Easter of 1928 the Sisters received the welcome news that the Dawson property, with forty acres of land, was theirs.

Immediately preparations were made for moving the orphans<sup>20</sup> to their new home, henceforth to be known as O'Connell Institute in grateful tribute to their benefactor. Winter clothing for eighty-five children was sewn, patched, and packed. Sister Annunciation, who had been named Superior of the new Institute, took some of the older girls to Primrose Place (as the Dawson estate was known) and succeeded in planting, with shovel and hoe, a generous quantity of potatoes and vegetables on the previously uncultivated land. The older girls also did the necessary cleaning, happy to be allowed to help the Sisters and to prepare a home for the young children. A horse, a democrat wagon, and a few cows were purchased to make "The Farm" complete. Later pigs and chickens were added, and the services of a handyman secured.

The pump on the property was only sufficient for seven or eight people, and attempts by a well-digger to locate a sufficient supply of good water failed. The Sisters were thus obliged (at a considerable cost) to make arrangements with the City to extend the water line to the building. In the meantime, at the suggestion of Archbishop O'Leary and through the co-operation of Mr. A. A. O'Brien, the Separate School Board erected a three-room school near the residence to accommodate the school-age children at O'Connell Institute and to serve the Catholic children of the Forest Heights district. The school, whose architectural design was planned to correspond with the Dawson mansion, was to be known as St. Teresa's. It was not ready for school opening day on September 1st, and so a large room in the basement of the house was used as a school-room until November. Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament was principal, while Sister Mary of St. Joseph, who had completed her teacher training the previous June, was engaged as primary teacher. Miss McMahon, a lay teacher, completed the staff.



Mr. J. D. O'Connell was a poor boy from New Brunswick who became wealthy through sugar plantations which he acquired in Cuba. His many charities towards unfortunate children earned him the title "The Orphan's Friend." By coincidence, the patroness of Cuba is Our Lady of Charity

<sup>20</sup> The delinquent girls remained at 96th Street.





Erected  
to the Memory of  
Archbishop Henry Joseph O'Leary  
His Friends  
the Priests of the Archdiocese



The Most Rev. H. J. O'Leary, whose beloved memory is perpetuated by a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the grounds of O'Connell Institute

On September 8th, 1928, Archbishop O'Leary opened and blessed the new Home, and dedicated it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. After the blessing His Grace the Archbishop publicly thanked Mr. O'Connell for his generous gift. His Worship Mayor Bury thanked Mr. O'Connell on behalf of the Edmonton children who would be housed in the new Home. Mr. O'Connell replied, expressing his pleasure at being able to give the Home to the orphans, and paying high tribute to the Sisters and their work. He then gave a picnic to some eight hundred Edmonton children who had gathered on the grounds of Primrose Place to meet "The Orphan's Friend."

The first years at O'Connell Institute were hard years, requiring long hours of toil and countless sacrifices of the Sisters. All the chores peculiar to farm life were added to the household and teaching tasks of the tiny Community. With but four Sisters and close to ninety children, twenty of whom were under school age, there was little time for leisure. The hired man was supposed to look after the garden, but weeds grew so rapidly that the older girls were obliged to help him to cope with them. The bigger girls, too, helped with the little ones, dressing and undressing them, washing and bathing them, developing the while that co-operative spirit which is so characteristic of a large and happy family.

During these early years, numerous difficulties were cheerfully borne, and God sent the generous Sisters consolations to compensate them for crosses and hardships. The children succeeded in school work and were devoted and co-operative with the Sisters. By means of contacts made with the parents of children who were either placed in the Institute or attending St. Teresa's School, the Sisters were able to assist a number of lax Catholics to return to the Sacraments. Numerous children were baptized and instructed for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. These spiritual consolations consoled the Sisters for the material discomforts to which they were subjected.

After the opening of the O'Connell Institute, the money solicited through collecting was allocated to provide food and clothing for the orphans and neglected children sheltered there. The arduous task of soliciting alms was occasionally relieved by amusing experiences. Once while collecting at a railroaders' camp during prohibition days, the Sisters were laughingly advised by the foreman to be careful of their choice of seat when accepting a ride. Later the story came out:

Two Sisters of a different Order had also been at the camp collecting. As they were about to board the train to go to the next camp, two men approached them and offered to drive them to the different camps along the line. The Sisters, believing the men were sent by the foreman of the construction camp, gladly accepted the offer. The men made them very comfortable on a large covered box on the wagon. On the way they were stopped by the Mounted Police, but after taking a look into the wagon and hearing the men's explanation that they were driving the Sisters, the Mounties allowed them to proceed. Imagine the dismay of the Sisters when they discovered, upon reaching the next camp, that the box they were sitting on was filled with whiskey and the bootleggers had made use of the Sisters to cover up their loot to evade the Police! <sup>21</sup>

During the decade that followed the opening of the O'Connell Institute, a generous amount of courage and faith

<sup>21</sup> *Annals, op. cit.*, p. 46

was required of all. There were now two institutions for the Community to staff and maintain. Both labor and funds had to be divided. Vocations were few and far between in the West, and money was as scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth. "It was truly the 'Hungry Thirties.' Children were brought to both of our homes, undernourished and possessing nothing except what they wore. Yet, thanks be to God, we always found a bed, something to eat and wear for one more."<sup>22</sup>

The direction of the affairs of the Community during the greater part of the "hard times" was in the capable hands of Mother Mary of St. Aloysius Buck. Though physically diminutive, this well-beloved Superior possessed the "large heart and ardent will" that St. John Eudes wished to bequeath to all his daughters. Sister Aloysius was born in 1864 at Latrobe, near Pittsburgh, of highly respectable, deeply religious and virtuous parents whose one aim in life was to give their large family a solid Catholic education. Sister Aloysius was accordingly placed as a boarder with the Sisters of Mercy who found her an apt pupil endowed with a brilliant intellect. She graduated at an early age and, desirous of giving herself to God's service, she applied for admission to the Pittsburgh Monastery of Our Lady of Charity in 1883.

The Community of Pittsburgh was then in its infancy. Modern conveniences were unknown. Poverty and hardships were the twin virtues demanded of its members, but Sister Aloysius gladly accepted all privations and with strong faith and indomitable will generously undertook any work assigned her by her Superiors, who found in the young Religious sound judgment, superior intelligence and exceptional business ability. When our Monastery of San Antonio, Texas, appealed to Pittsburgh for help, Sister Aloysius demonstrated her generosity by hastening to their aid. She remained in San Antonio for three years, until recalled by her Superior to Pittsburgh.

In March, 1912, Sister Aloysius was chosen to accompany our saintly foundress, Mother Mary of St. Leo, to Canada to make our foundation in Edmonton. "God's Honor and Glory" was the motto of these valiant and generous-hearted pioneers who endured many hardships to establish this work so dear to God. No sacrifice was too great for them to make, nor did they count the cost. Sister Aloysius shared in all the privations and bravely went from door to door and from mining camp to construction camp soliciting alms for the support of the children. By her cheerful, gracious manner she won the respect of all whom she met.

In May, 1917, Sister Aloysius was elected Superior, and with the exception of the years 1923 to 1926, she capably discharged this responsible office until ill-health obliged her to resign in 1940. It was during her term as Superior that the Monastery on 96th Street was purchased and the O'Connell Institute opened. Due to her foresight and skillful management the two institutions were able to continue during the depression and the hard times that followed.

There are a number of references in the *Annals* to the economic difficulties shared by all during the thirties. The following are selected to illustrate how the "hard times" affected the work of the Order in Edmonton:

We are surely passing through a trying time. There is so much unemployment in the city and every day poor men come begging a meal for charity. We, too, are poor but Our Very Honored Mother (Aloysius) puts her trust in Divine Provi-



Mother Mary of St. Aloysius Buck, Superior, 1917-23, 1926-40. Died, June 7, 1946

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90



There have been several vocations to the Religious life among our children. Above, a Bride of Christ before and below, after her reception to the holy habit in the Carmelite Order, Seattle



dence and refuses no one—and God rewards her for her charity, for we always seem to have a sufficient supply to go around. Our orphanage feels the effects of the depression as there are only a few of the eighty-five children who pay anything for their keep. Two Sisters who are teaching receive a salary from the Separate School Board—Thank God—and Mother Annunciation with the help of some of the older girls assist the janitor in planting acres of potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc., to help supply the necessary food. We also keep cows and pigs at O'Connell, and every penny is watched to enable us to tide over the hard times . . . Here at 96th Street we have (over 40 girls) . . . almost all charity cases, so it is very difficult at times, but we are not discouraged. God is with us. <sup>23</sup>

Some years later the following entry was made:

We are truly thankful to our Heavenly Father as we look back over the years. With the exception of dear Sister Agatha we all keep well. Financial worries still linger 'tis true, but when we consider the plight of others during these dark depression days we realize how very fortunate we are. Daily sad cases come to us for succor. Many of the children are under-nourished and scantily clothed when they come to us. One day the door-bell rang and a Protestant man entered carrying a little girl wrapped in a blanket. He had walked from . . . to ask us to take her. His wife (common law) had abandoned the child and home. Someone told him of our orphanage so he brought her to us asking us to care for her until he was able to do so himself. He had no money. Mother Annunciation told him we would look after his child, and then he made a second request. Could he have the blanket? It was far from clean and Mother was only too pleased to return it to him, but got the surprise of her life when she went to do so, for that was all the child had around her. Irene, who was almost two years old, was not as large as a five months child, but it was amazing how she responded to food and good care. She improved daily and before six months had passed was able to walk, run, and play with the others. <sup>24</sup>

This is only one case; there were many such. These children from unfortunate home circumstances proved to be the greatest consolation of the Sisters. As youngsters they were well-disposed and docile to the Sisters' instructions, and as adults they realized and did not hesitate to express their gratitude to the "Mothers" who had cared for and protected them in their tender years. Many of them at the present time correspond with the Sisters and visit the Institute, bringing along their own children and even grandchildren as proof of the happy homes which they have established for themselves. A number of them, after completing high school, were aided to enter the careers of teaching, stenography, nursing, etc. In one case, four girls from one family who had been placed in the O'Connell Institute by their father after the death of his wife were put through school by the Sisters and aided in obtaining nursing degrees. A number of others entered religious congregations. Many served their country in the various branches of the Armed Forces during the second World War.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93    <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96



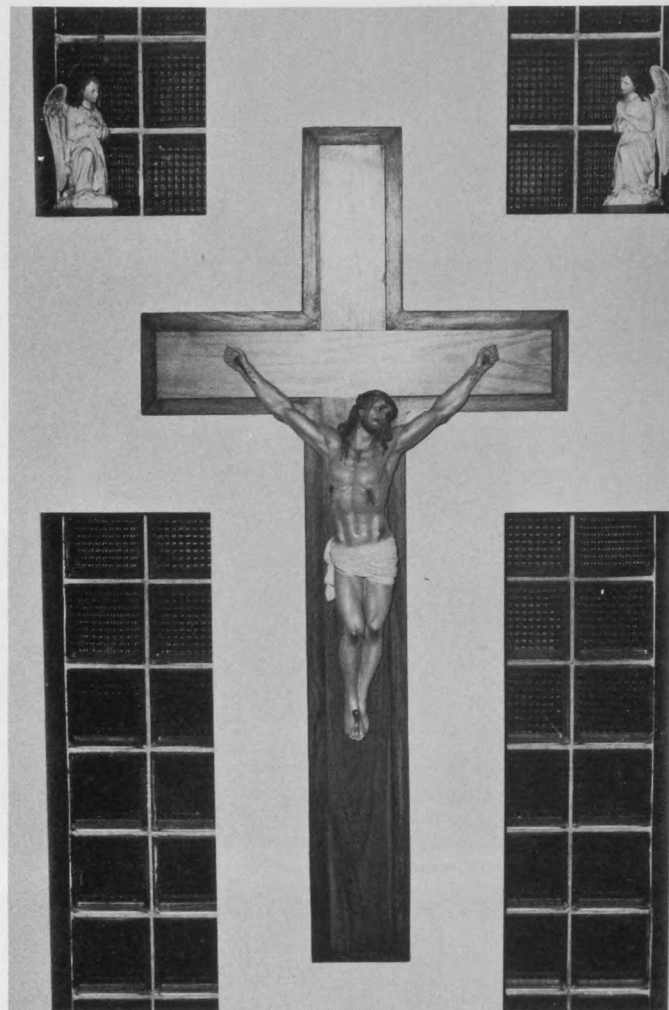
There is in the O'Connell Institute today a large crucifix given in loving tribute by one of the orphans. Mother Aloysius at one time heard that there were a number of Catholic babies in the Edmonton Children's Shelter. She approached the government Welfare authorities and offered to take care of any Catholic child under the Welfare Department until such a time as adoptive parents or a foster home was found for the child. In doing so Mother Aloysius was placing complete confidence in Divine Providence and public charity, for she knew that of itself the Community could not afford to look after even those children who had already been accepted. However, she was prompted to act by the two-fold conviction, firstly, that since the Catholic religion claims to be the one, true Faith it therefore insists that all children born in the Faith should be raised in it, and secondly, that God never forsakes those who willingly sacrifice themselves for the sake of the least of His brethren. The Welfare officials, glad of the opportunity to make temporary placements of homeless children, consented to her request. In this way a number of Catholic children who would otherwise have been educated in non-sectarian institutions were brought to the O'Connell Institute.

Most of these children were eventually placed in a foster home, an adoptive home, or, if they were older girls, in a position where they could earn a salary and become independent. It happened in one case that a child who had been brought as an infant was, for one reason or another, never placed out, and thus remained for both her elementary and secondary school training in our orphanage. At the conclusion of high school she indicated her interest in a commercial course and was accordingly enrolled in business school. Having proved herself an apt pupil, she completed the course and obtained an excellent position in a business firm. With her first savings she bought a crucifix of nearly life-size proportions and great artistic beauty and presented it to the Sisters as a testimony of her gratitude and affection. Later this same young woman entered a religious congregation. Consoled by the Faith in which she had been raised, she was called to her Eternal Home shortly after. Today the crucifix hangs over the entrance to the only home she had known on earth.

These are but a few examples of children who, by their successful lives, have given encouragement and satisfaction to those who have acted as their substitute Mothers. We do not mean to imply that successes have been recorded in all cases. Nor do we mean to imply that none of the girls of the delinquent class have ever shown their appreciation for the efforts of the Sisters on their behalf. Supervisors of the delinquent group often receive from past pupils letters with sentiments similar to the following:

Dear Mother M.,

I am writing to thank you . . . I am sorry I haven't written sooner, but I just couldn't seem to find the right words to express how I feel . . . I am very contented. I found a job working for a tailor. I like my work very much . . . I imagine that you thought I was very ungrateful when I left but I didn't know how to tell you how I felt. The Sisters in the Home were wonderful to me. With what I learned from you all, I know that I can make a decent life for myself. While I was there I learned a new faith in God. With His help and with the help you have given me, I can start over again. I didn't care what happened to me when I first came to the Home. Now I will try my hardest to make my family and the Sisters proud of me. I think God sent me there and I know that I will



This beautiful crucifix hangs in O'Connell Institute as one orphan's loving tribute of gratitude to her former home and her substitute "Mothers"



A pious priest once assured the Sisters that "If there were but one loaf of bread in all of Edmonton, the Good Lord would see to it that the orphans received their share." Above, a group of well-fed O'Connell children during the 'Hungry Thirties'



The first four Sisters at O'Connell Institute (left to right): Sister Mary of the Annunciation, Superior; Sister Mary of Lourdes, cook; Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, principal of St. Teresa's School; Sister Mary of St. Joseph, teacher



Older girls weeding in the garden . . .



. . . and afterwards, resting in the shade



O'Connell Institute, formerly the home of H. J. Dawson who owned coal mines in the Edmonton district.

## MEMORIES OF EARLY DAYS AT O'CONNELL INSTITUTE

For many years Rev. M. C. O'Neill, Rector of St. Joseph's Seminary, now Archbishop of Regina, instructed the children in Gregorian Chant. Even the tiniest added their voices to the "sweet singing in the choir"







Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the old chapel at O'Connell Institute. Rev. L. Pepin, O.M.I., at the altar

## ... EARLY DAYS AT O'CONNELL INSTITUTE



First Communion class at "Primrose Place," as the Dawson estate was formerly called





## ... EARLY DAYS AT O'CONNELL INSTITUTE

Until recent times, the O'Connell Institute was affectionately known as "The Farm." Above, Maud, the horse, is encouraged during a dry year by four enthusiastic farmerettes



In spite of the busy days, time was found to teach sewing and fancy work to the older children . . .



. . . and to read tales of wonder and imagination to the little ones



Mabel, Lillian, Verna and Gertrude Powers: four orphaned sisters who followed each other into the nursing career



After the death of her mother, Judy (with her three sisters) was brought by her father to the Sisters who lovingly cared for her. She developed into an attractive and talented young girl, was happily married, and is today the mother of four lovely children, three of whom are shown here



never regret that part of my life. You gave me love and help when I needed it most and I will always remember you for it. I wish that a lot more girls could have the chance to change that I've had. But many of them receive help too late. I'm glad I received it in time before I ruined my whole life. I had better go now. I hope you will write to me. I miss you and all the Sisters there very much. Goodbye for now.

Yours truly,  
Shirley P.

The following are notes of appreciation from the mothers of two girls who had been brought to the Sisters, in the first case, by the parents, and in the second case, by the Welfare authorities:

Dear Sister M.,

How can I ever thank you for all you have done for Margaret?

I want you to know that Margaret loves you very much, and always speaks so nicely of you.

What a wonderful tribute! I know that you must have many disheartening days, in your type of work, just as I did in my nursing days, but always there is that great Help from above, which carries us through, and a new day tomorrow.

Commending you to Him who doeth all things well, and with our most sincere thanks, and best wishes for your future.

Mrs. L. P.

Dear Sisters:

I want to thank you for your help, prayers and patience shown to Penny in bringing to her the realization of happiness found in living a good life. I would like to meet and thank each and everyone of you for what you have done for us. She was a model girl the last months she was home and we really enjoyed having her with us; no worry and sorrow this time. She married a fine man and is happy in her own home now. Thanks again and God bless you all.

Mrs. W.C.

It is interesting to note that the above three letters are from non-Catholics, who, it has been observed, are often better disposed than many of the Catholics while they are in the Institute and more inclined to express their gratitude after they leave.

These demonstrations of appreciation recompense in some small degree the sorrow and discouragement experienced by the Sisters when they receive word of past pupils who have been manifestly unsuccessful, at least in the eyes of the world. But the just judgments of the merciful God being inscrutable, we do not forsake the hope that these wandering sheep will, before their death, be returned to the enfolding embrace of the Heart of the Good Shepherd.

Thus far considerable mention has been made of the difficulties experienced by the Edmonton foundation. It would be misleading to imply that the poverty and hardships of the early years were never relieved by days of genuine joy and rejoicing. One such memorable event occurred in the Holy Year, 1925.



On May 31st of that year, only two weeks after the canonization of the popular St. Therese of Lisieux, the holy founder of our Order, Blessed John Eudes, was elevated to sainthood by the Vicar of Christ, Pope Pius XI. Though none of the Edmonton Community was able to attend the canonization ceremony in Rome, nevertheless a spirit of joy, peace and happiness permeated the Edmonton Monastery as the Sisters joined in spirit the sons and daughters of St. John Eudes, the Eudist Fathers and the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge and of the Good Shepherd all over the world.

In the early hours of the morning on May 31st, all repaired to the chapel to honor, glorify, and return thanks to God for the great blessing and sign of approval bestowed on the Order, and to assist at a solemn high Mass of thanksgiving sung by the Oblate Fathers. It was the first time a solemn high Mass took place in our chapel on 96th Street, as the sanctuary could hardly afford seating room for three priests. Rev. Father Patton, O.M.I., rector of St. Joseph's Seminary at the time, sang the Mass and brought two priests and the Seminary choir with him to make the Mass and day a perfect one. The exquisite music and beautiful singing of the scholastics, the reverent devotion of the children of both classes, the snow-white robes of the Religious, and the artistic decoration of the altar and shrine must have gladdened the heart of our Sainted Founder, as he viewed them from his heavenly throne.

In the evening, all reassembled in the chapel to listen to an eloquent sermon preached by Rev. J. C. McGuigan, D.D., Vicar-General of the Archdiocese, now Cardinal Archbishop of Toronto. In glowing words this learned doctor extolled the virtues of Saint John Eudes, and those who listened to the inspired words surely felt their devotion increased by the enthusiasm of the preacher. Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament followed the veneration of our Holy Founder's relic, after which the singing of the *Te Deum* brought a fitting close to a happy and memorable day.

A tridium in honor of our Holy Founder's canonization was held in October of the same year, 1925. Since our chapel was so small and could only accommodate the Sisters and our girls, the pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Rev. M. J. O'Gorman, kindly offered the use of his church to allow the laity an opportunity to benefit by the devotions. During three days of prayer the relic of our Sainted Founder was exposed for veneration in the beautifully decorated church. On the evening of the third day Archbishop O'Leary and twenty-three of the clergy gathered at our Monastery for a banquet and then repaired to Sacred Heart Church where the beloved Archbishop closed the tridium by solemn Benediction. As the triumphant strains of the *Te Deum* re-echoed through the church, the hearts of the Sisters were filled with gratitude to God for fulfilling, after years of patient waiting, the cherished hopes and desires of Saint John Eudes' religious family.

The Superior in Edmonton at the time of the canonization of St. John Eudes was Mother Mary of St. Ambrose Cahill, who had been privileged to accompany Mother Mary of St. Leo to Rome for the Beatification of our Holy Founder in 1909. Being a gifted artist, Mother Ambrose had at that time graciously assisted our dear Sisters in Caen, "Cradle of the Order," to paint banners and pictures to decorate their Monastery during the tridium celebrations. While in Edmonton, Mother Ambrose used her talent to transform the drab walls of the children's recreation room into scenes of picturesque beauty.

This dear Sister was cousin to Sister Mary of the Nativity Cahill who came to Edmonton in 1912, and sister to Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus Cahill of Pittsburg and Fathers R. Cahill and H. Cahill of the St. Paul diocese, Minnesota. Having entered



Mother Mary of St. Ambrose Cahill  
Superior, 1923-1926

our Monastery of Pittsburg from her home in Kilkenny, Ireland, she had in 1923 responded generously to an appeal from Edmonton for help. There being in our small Community at that time insufficient Sisters canonically eligible for the superiorship, and the appointed time for the deposition of Mother Mary of St. Aloysius approaching, the Edmonton Community had indicated to Pittsburg its need of a Sister who could carry, at least for a term, the burden of the superiorship. Thus Sister Ambrose generously left the Monastery of her profession and came to Edmonton. For three years she served the Edmonton Monastery with real motherly interest, true Christian charity and zeal, and endeared herself to the members of the Community by her cheerfulness and amiability. It was with great regret that the Sisters and all her friends realized that the severe winters of Alberta were taking a toll on her health. She suffered greatly from rheumatism and decided it was best that she return to Pittsburg after her deposition in 1926. She died there in 1939 after many years of labor and zeal as Mistress of Novices and *econome*.

The year following the departure of Mother Ambrose for Pittsburg the Community was honored by the visit of His Excellency Andrea Cassulo, D.D., Apostolic Delegate to Canada. Archbishop O'Leary was responsible for bringing the newly-appointed Delegate to the Monastery, the entrance of which had been decorated with streamers of white and gold extending from the ceiling to the floor. The children of St. Teresa's School presented His Excellency with a respectful address in which they expressed to him their gratitude for the distinction which our Monastery enjoyed in being honored with his visit. They pledged also their love for and loyalty to our Holy Mother the Church and to His Holiness Pope Pius XI whom the Delegate represented. His Excellency spoke a few words to all on the love of God and before leaving bestowed the Papal Blessing upon everyone.

Another event of importance in the ecclesiastical history of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, and one in which both Sisters and children took an active and interested part, was the holding of the First Eucharistic Congress in Edmonton in September of 1931. Church dignitaries gathered from all the dioceses of Western Canada to render homage to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Archbishop O'Leary had graciously given the Sisters at O'Connell Institute permission to have an open-air Mass for the occasion, but the fulfilment of that privilege was prevented by rain. However, solemn high Mass was celebrated indoors by the dearly-beloved chaplain of O'Connell, Rev. H. Routhier, O.M.I., then Rector of St. John's College, now Vicar-Apostolic of Grouard. Father Routhier was assisted by two other devoted friends of the orphans, Rev. J. O'Sullivan and Rev. D. Martin.

In the afternoon the weather cleared sufficiently to permit an out-door procession in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. The beautiful grounds afforded ample room for the procession to each of three out-door altars which had been erected at different places. Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by the Rt. Rev. C. L. Nelligan, now Titular Bishop of Fenice. All the children were dressed in white and wended their way from altar to altar, strewing flowers before the Blessed Sacrament and singing appropriate hymns the while. Even the tiny tots strewed flowers, and surely the sweet Heart of Jesus was more than a little consoled by these innocent hearts for the coldness and irreverence he receives from so many souls.

The following year on the feast of *Corpus Christi* a similar procession in honor of the Blessed Sacrament was held, and these impressive out-door ceremonies then became annual events for some years at O'Connell. By these demonstrations of their faith the Sisters intended to teach the children to give outward



Corpus Christi Procession at O'Connell Institute, May, 1932





evidence of their love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and of their gratitude to Him for His loving care of them.

November of 1933 heralded an occasion of unprecedented festivity for the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Edmonton. On the 21st of that month Mother Mary of St. Aloysius completed fifty golden years of labor for souls in the vineyard of her loving Spouse and Master. To honor the jubilarian, two days of celebration were set apart, one for the Sisters and children at the Monastery on 96th Street, and one for those at the O'Connell Institute. A message of congratulation and blessing from His Holiness Pope Pius XI was received and announced by His Excellency Archbishop O'Leary who was the celebrant of the special Mass of thanksgiving on November 21st. The sermon for the occasion was preached by His Excellency Archbishop McGuigan, then of Regina, who although busy with the many and onerous tasks of a large and very poor diocese, made the journey to Edmonton to do honor to one whose work in past times was well known to him. A large number of priests and religious were also present at the Mass. In the afternoon many friends of the jubilarian, Catholic and non-Catholic, called at the Monastery to pay their respects and offer good wishes.

On the following day, November 22nd, a second Mass of thanksgiving was offered by His Excellency Archbishop McGuigan at O'Connell Institute. At this Mass Archbishop O'Leary extended his good wishes and congratulated the jubilarian on behalf of the clergy, religious, and faithful of the Archdiocese. In the afternoon the O'Connell children presented a number of playlets, songs and recitations to do honor to one who for so many years had labored for God's little ones. This indeed was no ordinary concert, but the enthusiastic outpouring of love, reverence and gratitude from little hearts for one in whom they and many others for over fifty years had truly found a mother.

It was on the feast day of St. Joseph, the 19th of March, 1912, that Mother Aloysius had arrived with Mother Leo to begin their apostolate in Edmonton, the reclamation of wayward girls. From its inception, the delinquent class founded by these pioneer Sisters had been placed under the patronage of the foster father of Jesus and designated St. Joseph's Class. It was to St. Joseph also, to whom the guardianship of the Holy Family of Nazareth had been given, that the material welfare of the Monastery was entrusted.<sup>25</sup>

When the class for orphan children was opened at 96th Street during the influenza epidemic, it was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and called Sacred Heart Class. This group included all those children who, in 1928, moved to the O'Connell Institute and attended St. Teresa's School, as has been explained previously. However, since only grades one to eight were taught in St. Teresa's School, those girls of high school age who properly belonged in Sacred Heart Class remained at 96th Street in order more conveniently to attend the local high school. They continued to occupy quarters separate from the delinquents and had no communication with them. Since these young ladies were soon to make the important decision of choosing a state in life and of embarking on their chosen careers, Mother Aloysius decided to place them under the patronage of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Thus was formed in September of 1929 our third department of girls, Our Lady of Good Counsel Class.

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<sup>25</sup> *It was not uncommon during the depression years to find at the foot of St. Joseph's statue a potato or some other article of food to indicate that the Monastery's supply was running low and that supplication was being made to "the man nearest to God" to replenish the diminishing larder. This custom, inaugurated by Mother Aloysius, never failed to obtain results.*



Golden Jubilee of Mother Mary of St. Aloysius, Nov. 21, 1933



The Most Rev. J. M. Gannon, Bishop of Erie, with the Sisters who attended the General Assembly in Gannondale, July, 1939

In the early 1930's, because of her broad sympathy for the people of the surrounding districts who were hard pressed by the economic conditions, Mother Aloysius welcomed into Our Lady of Good Counsel Class young country girls from good homes who wished to attend high school but whose parents could not afford to board them in the city. With the changing times, the type of girl admitted into Our Lady of Good Counsel Class has changed, as has also the type of children placed in Sacred Heart Class, but the nature of these changes will be elaborated upon below.

The increasing complexity of modern life began to be reflected in the problems confronting the various houses of the Order by the historic year, 1939. For the first time in history of the Order of Our Lady of Charity in America, a General Assembly of the Superiors and a delegate from each Monastery in the United States and Canada was held at Gannondale, in the diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, from July 7th to July 12th, 1939. Mother Aloysius, accompanied by Mother Annunciation, went to Gannondale, and they visited at the same time our Monasteries in Pittsburg and Buffalo. It was over twenty-seven years since these two pioneers had left their cloister in Pittsburg, and they naturally found many changes. However, they derived much pleasure from meeting their dear Sisters—companions of their novitiate days—and in renewing acquaintances with the Monasteries visited.

The purpose of the Assembly was to discuss matters of vital importance and to try to solve the many problems which beset the Order in America at that time. The meeting was called with the consent of the respective bishops of the dioceses in which the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity are located. Because the first house of the Order is located in the Buffalo diocese, the Most Reverend John A. Duffy, Bishop of Buffalo, presided at the sessions, assisted by the Most Reverend J. Mark Gannon, Bishop of Erie, who was host to the Assembly.

His Excellency, the Bishop of Erie, at the request of Bishop Duffy and the Superior of the Buffalo Monastery, permitted the Assembly to be held at the beautiful Monastery which had been recently built at Gannondale. Because of its proximity to Lake Erie, and its attractive surroundings, Gannondale was a perfect setting for the Assembly. Everything was conducive to calm deliberation upon the vital needs of the Order. In addition, it provided an excellent opportunity for the Superiors and delegates to observe at close range the new "cottage system" inaugurated by Bishop Gannon in the training of the underprivileged girls committed to Gannondale by court jurisdiction.

At the opening session, an address of welcome was given by His Excellency, Bishop Gannon, who also gave a most inspirational portrayal of the attitude of Christ toward the erring ones of the fold. His Excellency gave an exposition of his own policies in dealing with sinners as it is manifested in his plan at Gannondale, which he invited all to observe during their residence there. A masterful interpretation of the philosophy of St. John Eudes clothed every word uttered by the zealous prelate. He impressed upon the Superiors the needs which the Order faced at that time in North America. He stressed very seriously the necessity of raising the standards of the Order to the highest efficiency in the training of the Religious in modern sociology. He spoke also of the advisability of relinquishing the old penal system of reclaiming wayward girls. He pointed out that the children committed to our care are wards of the court, and that we are simply their custodians temporarily and should not employ them in work which has for its purpose the obtaining of revenue for the Monastery. He expressed his repugnance to any commercialized form of work, the public laundry, for example, but at the same time he advised a solid



domestic training to make of these girls good mothers and wives for the future. From the famous English convert, Father Faber, he quoted that "The work of God must be done anew in every age and we should not make little of the differences of ages."

His Excellency Bishop Duffy repeated the sentiments of Bishop Gannon toward the delinquent girl of today, and praised the Bishop of Erie for his progressive plans at Gannondale. He urged the Superiors to adjust the Order to its needs in America and he viewed the entire situation from a sociological aspect. Bishop Duffy emphasized the advisability of establishing a central school of Social Service in the Order, where the Religious could be trained as specialists in the work of reform.

At this first General Assembly, Bishop Gannon pledged his support and assistance to the Order in whatever move was made to establish an American Union. Up to this time, each Monastery had preserved its own government independently of other houses, and had no other bond of union except charity and the unity of the same purpose. Because of the changing conditions of the times, there had become noticeable on the part of the various Monasteries a common desire to seek mutual advice on what might be termed "modern" problems. This was not the first time that mention was made of a union amongst the houses of the Order in America. As early as 1918 a number of the Monasteries in America had proposed the formation of a new organizational arrangement, either by uniting with the Generalate of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers, or by soliciting an entirely new erection from the Holy See. The answer from Rome was that the time to discuss this affair had not yet arrived.

It happened, however, that in the ensuing years a number of other Religious Institutes also petitioned Rome for some sort of union. The Apostolic See benignly listened to these supplications and, recognizing the benefits to be derived from union, in many cases granted the request. In 1922 an article appeared in the *Commentary for Religious* (cpr. 111, p. 305-317) which supplied information and guidance for Institutes planning union, and indicated the favorable attitude of the Holy See. However, the constitutions of such unions as were permitted at the time provided for certain internal changes (such as those affecting vows, papal enclosure, and the status of the Order) which were not deemed acceptable by many of the Monasteries of our Order.

In 1931 a General Assembly of all the houses of the Order was held in Caen, but lack of funds and scarcity of Sisters made it impossible for the Edmonton Community to attend. The first question presented for the consideration of the delegates to Caen concerned the means which might be taken to attain a real, effective union based on authority. Nineteen against sixteen of the houses represented voted for a Generalate. In the following year each of the Monasteries of the Order was requested to take a vote as to whether or not it desired union, the stipulation being that union implied a "complete" Generalate, for the Sacred Congregation of Religious would not favor the "mitigated" Generalate proposed at the General Assembly in Caen. The "complete" Generalate would have formed, in the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge, a second Congregation like that of the Good Shepherd of Angers, with its Motherhouse, Assistant Generals, Provincials, common novitiate, etc. The Superiors of the individual Monasteries would no longer be elected; they would be nominated by the General Council. Thus the independence of the individual Monasteries would be sacrificed.

At the Edmonton scrutiny of 1932 Archbishop O'Leary presided, assisted by Rev. Father Hyacinth, O.F.M. The Chapter voted in favor of the Generalate, and forwarded this result to

Rome. Rev. G. Mallet, C.J.M., Vicar of the Cardinal Protector of the Order, congratulated our Monastery on the result of the scrutiny, and informed us that it was in accord with the views of His Eminence, Cardinal Lepicier, who was at the same time Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

It was expected that the Sacred Congregation in Rome would take considerable time to arrange everything, and in actuality the question of union lay dormant for many years. After it was re-introduced at the Assembly in Gannonale in 1939 there were further delays caused by the difficulties of communication between Europe and America during the Second World War. For Edmonton, the delay lasted until 1961, when it was finally decided that we petition membership in the American Federation which had been formed and officially recognized by Rome in 1944.

In the meantime, a great many matters of local and international concern had occurred. The disastrous War of 1939-45 filled us with compassion for the widespread ruin, the immense loss of human life, and the sad mourning of so many unfortunate and afflicted people. In Canada we suffered little, for the government had a judicious ration system and we were able to obtain a good quota of all necessities without difficulty. Yet the horrors of war were close to us as day after day those who had assisted us both spiritually and temporally, friends of the Community or near relatives of the Sisters, donned uniforms and left home and kindred to answer to the call of duty.

During these terrible years we offered our small privations and sacrifices to God in a spirit of supplication and summoned the prayers of the little ones confided to our care, beseeching our Merciful Redeemer to speedily end the terrible scourge. We shared in the distress of our beloved Pontiff, Pius XII, whose fatherly heart was sorely grieved to see so many of his dear children torn and harassed by cruel oppressors. We shared in spirit the anguish of our dear Sisters in France and Italy and England, as previously we had compassionated our Monasteries oppressed by the persecutions in Mexico in 1926 and Spain in 1936. We prayed that God would comfort and sustain them in the dreadful days of horror and destruction.

On account of the war censorship, news from our Monasteries in England and Ireland was meagre, while communication with our Monasteries on the continent of Europe was virtually cut off. Our hearts were filled with anxiety regarding the fate of our dear Sisters in Caen when, on June 6th, 1944, news reports on the radio announced the invasion of Normandy. Caen was demolished by bombs, machine guns, tanks, and all manner of destructive devices. With anxious hearts we waited and prayed, and our first news came from Colonel Rev. M. C. O'Neill, M.M., Principal R.C. Chaplain of the Canadian Army Overseas, who mailed us an English newspaper showing a picture of a group of our Sisters on the roadside in France. Underneath the picture was the information, "Cloistered nuns bombed from their Monastery in Caen care for the sick and the wounded, their only shelter an old barn loaned them by a farmer." It added that they had left Caen for Bayeux. Later we learned that our dear Monastery of Caen, the "Cradle of the Order," had been reduced to ashes, and that the Sisters, destitute of this world's goods, only reached Bayeux on the 11th of August. Many times they had been in grave danger from the fire of the attackers and also of the Nazis. We were very happy to be able to send them some assistance, for our financial position had noticeably improved during the war years. Although we still were soliciting alms in the country parishes, a Community Chest had been established in the City of Edmonton in 1941, which eliminated the necessity of soliciting within the

city limits. Father Timothy Ryan was one of the prime movers in having the Community Chest established, and as he had always taken a special interest in our work, he was alert to our needs and saw to it that we were assigned a satisfactory quota of the funds.

With the commencement of European hostilities in 1939, the Edmonton airport had taken on new significance as a training centre and strategic port of defence. The city itself, because of its location on the most direct route to the North, played an important role in military activities. The year 1942 marked a new epoch in the history of Edmonton and its great northern hinterland. This was brought about by the construction of the 1,600 mile Alaska Highway, a project which employed ten thousand U.S. Army engineers and six thousand civilian workmen. As "the Gateway to the North," Edmonton was the starting point and distribution centre for this gigantic undertaking. Daily the population of the city was swelled as American Army personnel, contractors, and business concerns took over many of Edmonton's largest buildings or built new ones to serve their needs. The population of the city continued to grow at an alarming rate during the following years — the more alarming because all but top-priority construction was restricted and the problems of housing and business accommodation became more acute than they had been since the real estate boom of 1912.

From the beginning of the war on, there was a sharp increase in the number of girls admitted to our care. In Edmonton, as in the rest of Canada, money had become more plentiful, and so had the pitfalls in the path of the young. Both institutions became overcrowded and it was soon obvious that facilities would have to be renovated and expanded to provide for the increased numbers. Mother Annunciation, into whose hands the reins of government had been placed in 1940, put before the Sisters the need of a new building, as the Monastery on 96th Street was no longer suitable for carrying on the rapidly expanding work. However, it was soon found that construction materials were impossible to obtain on account of the war. The Community was obliged to carry on in the best possible way for the duration, in spite of the inadequate facilities.

In 1947 Archbishop MacDonald decided to take advantage of the postwar prosperity by an archdiocesan campaign directed towards benefiting certain very clearly specified religious, charitable and educational services. The first need of the archdiocese was a seminary for the training of future priests, as the old seminary building was crowded and badly in need of repair. The second objective of the campaign was the relief of various charitable institutes which had become inadequate due to the abnormal conditions caused by the war and the increasing needs of the expanded population. The overcrowded conditions at the O'Connell Institute were well known to Edmonton's Chief Pastor, and the kindly heart of Archbishop MacDonald was directed toward relieving our evident need.

By the end of the war, we had taken in more children at O'Connell Institute than we could conveniently accommodate. Although there was room for sixty girls, or up to seventy-five with crowding, yet by 1947 we were obliged to provide for from one hundred to one hundred ten girls, and to care for some of them for several years. Nearly fifty per cent of these girls received no government aid whatsoever. Many of them came from broken families due to one cause or another. Some of them paid something, some nothing. Their parents in many cases did not wish to have their children scattered, but looked to the Sisters to give the needed care and training until one or other of the parents could re-establish a suitable home of his or



her own for the family. It was very difficult for us to have to deny these people the help they so greatly needed, and there were few other institutes in the city where people in difficult circumstances could place their children.

Due to the benevolence of Archbishop MacDonald, and by means of the campaign, a new wing of solid brick construction was built at the O'Connell Institute adjoining the north wall of the original Dawson home. The contract for the building was let to Morin Brothers, and excavation began May 5th, 1947. The cornerstone for this "MacDonald Wing" was solemnly blessed on May 16th by His Eminence James C. Cardinal McGuigan, Archbishop of Toronto. The children made a very pretty picture as, dressed in red and white, they preceded the procession of priests and the Cardinal from the chapel to the site of the blessing of the cornerstone. Archbishop MacDonald and a large number of priests from city and country were present for the ceremony.

Although the wing was to have been finished in 1947 it was only on October 20th, 1948 that it was ready for occupation. On that day our worthy Archbishop celebrated Mass and blessed the building. The official opening took place the following Sunday. Archbishop MacDonald and a large number of priests attended and hundreds of the laity called as well as many of the Religious Sisters of the City. The extra dormitory and dining space, the new infirmary, parlors, kitchen, and beautiful chapel made it more pleasant for both Sisters and children, and we were deeply grateful to our good Archbishop for his generosity towards us. The Rotary Club showed its appreciation of our work by furnishing a recreation room for the children in the new wing.

It was unfortunate that Mother Aloysius, who had been Superior at the time the O'Connell Institute was opened, had died before the addition of the spacious new "MacDonald Wing." This sweet soul had fallen and broken her hip in August of 1944 and remained bedridden until her death on June 7th, 1946. "Dear Mother Aloysius," as she was known throughout the archdiocese, was universally loved by priests and laity, and people came in throngs to say a last goodbye. Over two hundred Mass offerings were received and the Sacred Heart Church was filled to overflowing for her funeral. Over fifty priests accompanied the procession to the cemetery on that beautiful June morning. The silence of the graveyard was disturbed by the heart-broken sobs of the children as they saw their loved Mother lowered into the earth. Her charity to all in need had been an inspiration and a blessing to so many. Messages of sympathy were received from far and near, the following being typical of the sentiments of her many friends:

Bishop's Residence  
McLennan, Alberta  
June 21, 1946

Dear Mother Annunciation:

Although the death of dear Mother Aloysius comes after several years of diminishing strength, and a fading in the power of her mind, we do not at all like the idea that such a kind and generous and pious soul should no longer be among those to whom she was such a rare example of virtue. I think that no one among the clergy had anything but the greatest admiration for her. She was so near to God and so motherly and had such constant gratitude for all who had helped her, even though she had probably done a thousand times more than she ever received. She was truly a Saint with the capital S, a wonderful friend of God, whose intercession will be a powerful help to the greater progress of your institutions. I have no fear that her purification

was not complete, for her life was one of limitless charity. I shall say my Mass tomorrow for her, but have the impression that God will apply it to something dear to her, rather than to any personal needs she might have.

Kindly accept my very sincere sympathy in this your great loss, and believe that I shall always remain deeply attached to the Sisters . . .

(signed) † Henri Routhier, O.M.I.

Prolonged, tense years of uneasy peace followed World War II, and the post-war period showed a marked increase in crime, divorce, juvenile delinquency, broken homes, and kindred evils. The threat of atomic war bred fear, insecurity, and turmoil. In Korea and in other parts of the world armed conflict was renewed. The spread of atheistic Communism signified that something was terribly wrong with the world and with the hearts of men. In the autumn of 1949 the zealous Irish priest, Father Patrick Peyton, visited Western Canada and stirred the faith and hope of thousands by his appeal to all to respond to the message of Our Lady at Fatima to obtain world peace through the recitation of the Rosary.

In Edmonton the Rosary Crusade was a marvellous success. Over sixty thousand persons assembled at Clarke Stadium to assist at open-air Mass and to hear Father Peyton speak on the saving power of the Rosary and the need of family prayer. In the centre of the stadium four hundred children formed an eight-pointed star around the statue of Our Lady of Fatima which was mounted on a twenty-five foot obelisk. Fifty of our little girls from O'Connell Institute made up one point of the star. Dressed in white and wearing veils and blue capes, their striking appearance won many favorable comments from the onlookers. The rally made a lasting impression on the children, who became fervent clients of Our Lady through the intercessory medium of the Rosary. Marian devotion was renewed in the following years by the visit to both our institutes of the miraculous statue of Our Lady of the Cape in 1951 and the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima in 1957.

The ever-increasing need of a new home for the girls of St. Joseph's Class and Our Lady of Good Counsel Class was finally satisfied when in 1951 the Sisters decided to build a residence-school for the girls who had, since 1918, been located at 96th Street. The site chosen for the new building was the northeast corner of the spacious grounds belonging to O'Connell Institute. For a long time it had been felt that the two institutions should be closer together in order to facilitate the administration of the two houses as one Community. Besides, during the years since the opening of the orphanage in 1928, the O'Connell Institute had been supplying milk and vegetables to the Monastery on 96th Street, and the Monastery had done the laundry for the Institute. Transportation of farm products and laundry between the two homes, as well as exchange of personnel during business or social visits, would no longer be a problem, as the two houses would be within sight and walking distance of each other.

On March 25th, 1950, Archbishop MacDonald offered Mass at O'Connell Institute and afterwards turned the sod for the new residence. Excavation began on June 7th, and the first Mass was offered by His Excellency in the new building on September 8th, 1951, feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The following day "Open House" for the public was held, and representatives of the clergy, the Government of Alberta,



Wearing his characteristic cheery smile, His Eminence James C. Cardinal McGuigan gathers around him his little friends at O'Connell Institute. The occasion was the blessing of the cornerstone for the new addition to the Institute, May 16, 1947



The cornerstone of the "MacDonald Wing" is blessed by His Eminence James C. Cardinal McGuigan, Archbishop of Toronto. Assisting him is Father Daniel Martin, Field Chairman of the Archdiocesan Campaign which made possible the addition to the O'Connell Institute

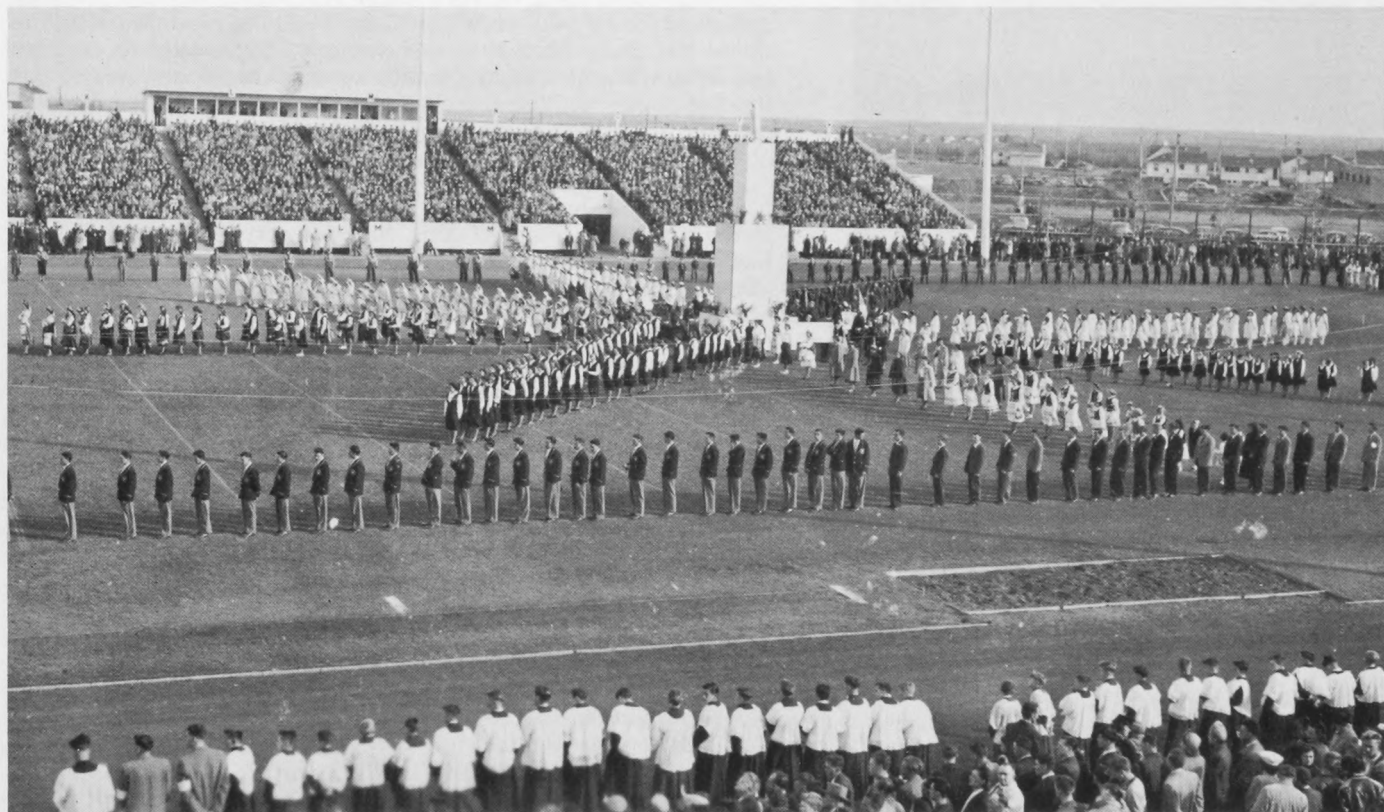




Devotion to the Mother of God has a pre-eminent place in the spirituality of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity. Above, a shrine to Our Heavenly Queen in the Monastery chapel during the Marian Year, 1954



The pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima carried in procession by the girls of Our Lady of Charity School, June, 1957



Wearing white dresses and blue capes, the children of O'Connell Institute form one point of the star around Our Lady, Star of the Sea, at the Rosary Crusade Rally in Clarke Stadium, October 9, 1949

the City of Edmonton, the Catholic Women's League, the Separate School Board, and the Community Chest were present.

On September 11th the girls from 96th Street were transported to their new home. On September 12, the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the last Mass was offered by our chaplain, Father Walter Fitzgerald, in the old Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. Only four Sisters still remained in the venerable building, and during the Mass they could with difficulty restrain their tears, for the little chapel which had been the scene of their religious reception and profession was rich in memories. The Monastery on 96th Street had been the witness to poverty, trials, and triumphs, and it had been our happy home for thirty-three years.

The new building was modern in structure and design and had been planned to provide for all the spiritual, physical, and educational needs of the girls. One hundred and ninety feet long, with three projecting wings one hundred and twenty-two feet in depth, the foundation walls of the building were concrete with a frame and stucco superstructure. The main portion, sixty feet in width, was finished in tapestry brick, and contained the lovely new chapel with seating for about one hundred and twenty persons.

On the ground floor there were eight dormitories, two recreation rooms, three dining rooms, kitchen, boiler room, laundry rooms, and the necessary washroom facilities. On the ground floor, too, were the storage rooms, medical clinic, and two "night rooms" for isolation of disturbed girls or accommodation of new girls brought in during the night.

The first floor had four dormitories, two school rooms, four reception rooms, one music room, two offices, and a gymnasium sixty-eight feet long by forty-eight feet wide, finished with an eight-foot dado and acoustical board on the walls and ceiling above the dado. Lockers and showers were provided in connection with the gymnasium. In addition there were fourteen rooms for the Sisters on the first floor, and dormitory and recreation facilities for the Sisters of the Novitiate. The area of each floor of the building covered approximately 16,000 square feet.

The new building was capable of providing care and training for one hundred girls. Since it served a dual purpose, being both a (temporary) home to the Sisters and a residence school for the girls, it was known under two titles: Monastery of Our Lady of Charity and Our Lady of Charity School for Girls. However, the building is often erroneously called the "Good Shepherd Home," as had also been the old Monastery on 96th Street. The reason for this false application of title is explained above (see page 30).

The new Monastery was open less than two months when it was blessed with the saintly death of one of our dear Sisters. Sister Mary of St. Agatha Beidler was born at Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1888. A member of a large family, she had had all the advantages of a truly Christian home. Her parents, fervent Catholics, had taught their children to love prayer and to see and serve God in their neighbor, so that it was not surprising to find their daughter Theresa applying at an early age for admittance to our Monastery of Pittsburgh. She was received there as a postulant in 1907 and on April 25th, 1909, had the happiness of pronouncing her holy vows.

Sister Agatha served the house of her profession faithfully and well in any duty assigned until 1919 when she generously offered to come to Edmonton to assist our small Community which, due to the influenza epidemic, was greatly in need of help at that time. She was not discouraged by the many hard-



Sister Mary of Saint Agatha Beidler  
Died, November 3, 1951

ships and sacrifices asked of her during those early years, and gave herself whole-heartedly to the charges assigned her until ill-health forced her to curtail her activities. Then, for almost fifteen years, she spent the greater part of each year in hospital and underwent numerous operations. She good-naturedly referred to the terrible abscesses which recurred as her "blossoms," and used to say jokingly that she wished she looked sick so that she could get a little sympathy. Many times the doctors despaired of her life. Her patient suffering and cheerful resignation to God's Holy Will finally won its reward, and eleven years before her death God removed the cross and she was able to resume her duties. Her joy at being able to be active again was unbounded, and she never ceased to thank God for this great gift.

While making preparations to leave 96th Street in 1951, Sister Agatha seemed to have a premonition of death and often was heard to remark that she would not be moving to our new home. She did move, however, and was exceedingly happy to be able to attend the Forty Hours Devotion at O'Connell Institute six weeks later. She walked back and forth between the O'Connell and the new Monastery on her frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and seemed determined to spend as much time as possible in adoration before her Eucharistic Spouse. After the closing exercises she appeared blissfully happy, and before the week was out she was called to her reward, November 3rd, 1951.

Sister Agatha's great love for Holy Mass and the Blessed Sacrament, her intense devotion to the Blessed Virgin and good St. Joseph were marked characteristics of her life. She always looked forward to the First Friday and First Saturday, and our Blessed Mother showed her love for her by taking her on the First Saturday.

Sister was a gifted needlewoman and loved to use her talent in embroidering linens for the altar or teaching the older girls to sew and do fancy work. She also had a tender sympathy for the sick and showed her generosity of spirit by being always ready to assist others. She is tenderly and humorously remembered by the Sisters for her fondness for ice cream and a party; she loved to go to the kitchen to whip up candy or some other treat for the Sisters and girls.

Sister Agatha's death was the second to sadden the Community within two years. Sister Mary of the Nativity Cahill, it will be recalled, had been one of the founding Sisters of 1912, but ill-health had obliged her to return to Pittsburgh in 1916. Upon her return to the house of her profession she was again employed as supervisor of the delinquent class, and she led an active Community life until her Golden Jubilee in 1947. In honor of that occasion her Superior, as a happy surprise for her, arranged that she pay a visit to our Monastery in Edmonton. She received a warm welcome from Mother Annunciation, the only other surviving Sister of those who came on the foundation, and the rest of our Community were delighted to meet her to whom we felt we owed much. The days passed speedily and happily during her visit, but on the date set for her return she suddenly became seriously ill. After some weeks in hospital she came to our infirmary, where for almost three years she bore her illness with true Christian fortitude and resignation. She edified all by her calm acceptance of the doctor's verdict that she would never return to Pittsburgh. She died on the eve of Pentecost, 1950. Sister Nativity was a very lovable person and a model Religious, and her death resembled her life: peaceful, resigned, and happy.

The coronation of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 brought joy to all Canada and we were happy to unite with





By Command of  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
the accompanying Medal is forwarded to

Reverend Mother Annunciation  
to be worn in commemoration of  
Her Majesty's Coronation  
2nd June, 1953



Prince Philip with Mayor and Mrs. Wm. Hawrelak smile approval as one of the little girls from O'Connell Institute presents a bouquet to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, on the occasion of the Royal Visit to Edmonton, July, 1959

her loyal subjects of the Commonwealth in asking God to grant her a fruitful, peaceful reign. Many of our children had been privileged to see Her Majesty and Prince Philip when they visited Alberta two years previously and were charmed by their gracious, friendly smiles. Our Community has a treasured souvenir of Her Majesty's coronation as our dear Mother Annunciation was one of the few Albertans to receive a Coronation Medal. Mother got the surprise of her life when she received the registered parcel from Ottawa. She wondered why she should get the medal, but we knew that the honor was well-deserved, for the Coronation Medal was awarded to heads of organizations who had done outstanding work. Mother Annunciation had spent forty-one years in Alberta caring for the orphan, the neglected child, the poor, and the wayward, and countless souls who knew no other Mother were indebted to her for wise counsel and for assistance when it was most needed.

Six years after the coronation Her Majesty again visited Edmonton, and city officials chose one of our little girls from O'Connell Institute to present the bouquet to the Queen at the civic reception. We were proud of the honor bestowed on us, and proud, too, of the gracious Royal Couple who are such exemplary Christian rulers.

We had not been long in our new Monastery before a multitude of new buildings mushroomed in the formerly vacant fields to the south and east of our property. Beginning in 1947, the discovery of vast oilfields in the near vicinity of Edmonton had caused enormous commercial and industrial expansion in the district. Thousands of newcomers crowded the city streets—speculators, oilfield workers, industrialists and others attracted by the spectacular developments. Instead of levelling off after the war, the population of Edmonton had continued to increase at a dramatic rate.<sup>26</sup> As utilities and other improvements were extended to the many new buildings east of our property, taxes on our land greatly increased. By 1953 we found ourselves obliged to sell half of our fifty acres. Soon after more than fifty houses divided by streets and lanes and a fifteen room elementary and junior high school (St. Kevin's) were built on what was formerly pasture land for our cows.

Already a distributing centre for a large, rich agricultural area, Edmonton had now entered a new era as a manufacturing centre of importance. The city's postwar industrial expansion naturally brought with it all the social problems that usually accompany rapid material progress. Municipal and welfare services had to keep pace with the multiplied needs of the people. Delinquency increased in proportion to the population, and street gangs made their appearance in the early 1950's. Government and civic officials decided on prompt and energetic action. Legislation was revised to facilitate handling of the problem. The Police Department of the City of Edmonton formed in 1951 a Youth Guidance Branch<sup>27</sup> aimed at combatting delinquency through investigation of crimes involving juveniles. The Government of Alberta transferred the responsibility for the care, custody, and rehabilitation of delinquent children from the Child Welfare Branch to the Juvenile Offenders Branch newly formed in 1952. Neglected children continued under the custody of the provincial and city Child Welfare departments.

The Juvenile Offenders Branch used our facilities at Our Lady of Charity School for the girls under their custody from 1952 until 1958 when the Attorney General's Department

<sup>26</sup> Edmonton is at present Canada's fourth largest city with a metropolitan area of 110 square miles and a metropolitan population (1961) of 327,139.

<sup>27</sup> Now the Juvenile Investigation Branch.

opened in North Edmonton a maximum security institute for female delinquents. Wards of the Juvenile Offenders Branch from our home and from Mountview Social Service Home in Calgary were then transferred to the new institute. We were reluctant at the time to relinquish our Catholic girls to a state institute where they would receive neither religious instruction nor the spiritual benefits of Mass and the sacraments. A petition to the Attorney General's Department for permission to retain Catholic wards of the Juvenile Offenders Branch was refused except in the case of Catholic girls who were also wards of the Indian Affairs Branch. We received, however, the assurance that weekly religious services would be made available to Catholics admitted to the Alberta Institution for Girls. The Franciscan Fathers of North Edmonton have since been entrusted with the chaplaincy of the new institute.

It is not to be implied that the Sisters did not feel the need of an institute in Alberta for highly disturbed and difficult delinquents. Our own institute had, within a few years after opening, become crowded to a point that would have been absolutely unpredictable in 1951. For the first few years after the opening of Our Lady of Charity School one wing with four dormitories was completely unoccupied and the other two wings were less than filled. Then suddenly the number of girls brought for admission enormously increased. By 1955 not only were all the dormitories filled but a tenth and even twelfth bed was added to every room originally intended for eight. The recreation and dining rooms became overcrowded and there was insufficient school-room space. This congestion continued for the next four or five years, and the opening of the Alberta Institution partially relieved the situation. The greatest benefit, however, of the new institute was that it provided a detention home in Alberta where particularly difficult cases could be segregated for their own re-habilitation and in order to prevent their influencing other girls.

There appears to be a growing assumption on the part of the public that juvenile misbehaviour has not only increased (as it naturally would with the growth in population), but also that offenders have tended to become involved in more and more serious trouble. It did seem to the Sisters that the wayward girl of the 1950's was less stable and more intractable than her counterpart of a generation previous. Doubtless the insecurity caused by the war and its aftermath had a detrimental effect on many young people. The breakdown of moral values, the materialism and irreligion of the present times has been deeply impressed on modern youth through the mass media of communication. The continuation of a tense and troubled world situation is reflected in the lives of many unfortunate teen-agers who can not help but be influenced by the social injustices and turmoil of the adult world.

The majority of girls admitted to Our Lady of Charity School since its opening have been from inadequate and broken homes where they were deprived of love, security, and discipline. All need the refining influences of genuine motherly love and Christian education. The desirability of dividing large groups of girls into smaller units has always been recognized by the Sisters. Unfortunately, the layout of the new building did not provide the means for so doing. Lack of staff was a second factor that limited our giving the individual attention so much needed by the girls. In an effort to overcome this difficulty, admission to the school in recent years has been restricted and lay staff have been hired. Plans for the near future include the building of a separate Monastery for the Sisters. The space thus made available would provide additional school-room and home economics facilities, and would enable the present two divisions of girls to be broken down into smaller groups.

The advantage of separating those who have been led from the path of virtue from those who have been committed for minor faults and who are undoubtedly less culpable is evident. A word of explanation should be offered here regarding the two classes of girls in Our Lady of Charity School at present. That which was first formed in 1912, St. Joseph's Class, still includes those girls designated as delinquent according to the reasons for which they are admitted. The second division, Our Lady of Good Counsel Class, had been organized during the depression for the benefit of poor girls who wished to take advantage of city residence in order to attend high school. After economic conditions improved, this class was continued under the same name but for girls admitted as first offenders or "pre-delinquents." This latter term designates those girls who show tendencies toward delinquency such as truancy, insubordination, or an attraction for bad companions.

As is usually the case with classification systems, it is sometimes difficult to designate properly the group to which a particular girl should belong. A separate class for the reception of new girls would facilitate placing of newcomers in their appropriate division. In a period of perhaps two weeks, intelligence and psychological tests could be administered, medical examination given, and the girl's social history studied. With the present set-up segregation of newcomers is not possible, but it is hoped that such a receiving class will become a reality in the near future.

It is not only at Our Lady of Charity School that the need to respond to the exigencies of the times has been felt. During recent years there has been a twofold change of emphasis in the institutional care of children which has affected to some extent the O'Connell Institute. In the first place, when the O'Connell Institute was opened, it was occupied chiefly by orphans. At the present time only a very small percentage of the children under the care of the Sisters are either full or half orphans. Most of those admitted since the war have been from broken homes. Many have been neglected either physically or morally or both. In some cases illness or absence of a parent has caused a temporary breaking of the family circle, or the child has been left an orphan by the desertion of parents.

At the same time that the population make-up of the O'Connell has been thus altered, there has been another change in that the public attitude toward institutional care of children has, during the past twenty years, undergone a double revision. It was realized by those who worked with children that even the best institution is unable to offer many of those intangible values which are to be found in the average home. The institution might conceivably give the child better shelter, food, clothing and education than his own home could afford, but he must, to a great extent, be deprived of the individual attention and affection which every child needs and to which he has a right. With all the good will in the world it is impossible for several people in charge of a large group to know each individual child well enough to supply that personal touch, those helpful suggestions, that little word of praise or congratulation or encouragement which means so much to the child.

With this increased emphasis on the individual needs of the particular child there was a swing in Alberta toward placing of children in foster homes. Homes were sought by welfare agencies where warm parental care could be offered to children who were removed by necessity from their own homes. Foster parents were sought who would take homeless children either permanently for adoption or else for as long as the foster child needed the substitute family. For a while

. . . it was thought that a plentiful supply of such foster parents was readily available and provided



the answer to all needs of all children who were separated from their own parents.

During those years, institutions fell into disuse and many closed their doors, or kept open in spite of the suspicion and criticism to which they were subjected by a doubting community . . . Probably this was a phase which had to be endured, yet in the last few years we have witnessed a major swing of the pendulum to a point where institutional care is now regarded as an important resource in the child welfare program . . . The experience of agencies using foster homes during the last fifteen years has led to the belief that this type of care *does not* have the answer to the problems of *some* children who must be placed . . . Past experience with children needing foster care, coupled with enriched understanding of what children need and how their needs may be met, has resulted in a growing conviction, of which there is now some impressive proof, that *certain children need care in company with other children*, whereas other children require for their optimum development individualized care in a normal home setting . . . Although all children are different, it is possible to suggest types of children who seem most readily to fit into foster homes, and *other groups of children for whom group care seems to be preferable*.<sup>28</sup>

Institutionalized children for whom foster home placement is put off temporarily or permanently still require the loving care of a home atmosphere, and the O'Connell Institute has attempted to provide such in spite of the shortage of Sisters. The continued scarcity of vocations coupled with the increased number of girls admitted has compelled the Community in recent years to add a number of lay members to the teaching and domestic staff of both our institutes. The serious dearth of vocations in all Religious Congregations in the Archdiocese of Edmonton prompted the Redemptorist Fathers to sponsor in March of 1955 a Vocation Exhibit in St. Alphonsus parish hall. The purpose of the exhibit was to depict the work of the various Religious Orders and Congregations in the Archdiocese and to interest young men and women in becoming candidates for the priesthood and the religious life. Our Community was invited to sponsor a booth which would demonstrate the particular apostolate of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity and portray the work of the Order in Edmonton. Although the booth elicited much interest and comment, it was not successful in attracting any vocations to our Order. We hoped, however, that the Catholic youth of the Archdiocese achieved through the Exhibit a better understanding of our work with wayward girls and neglected children.

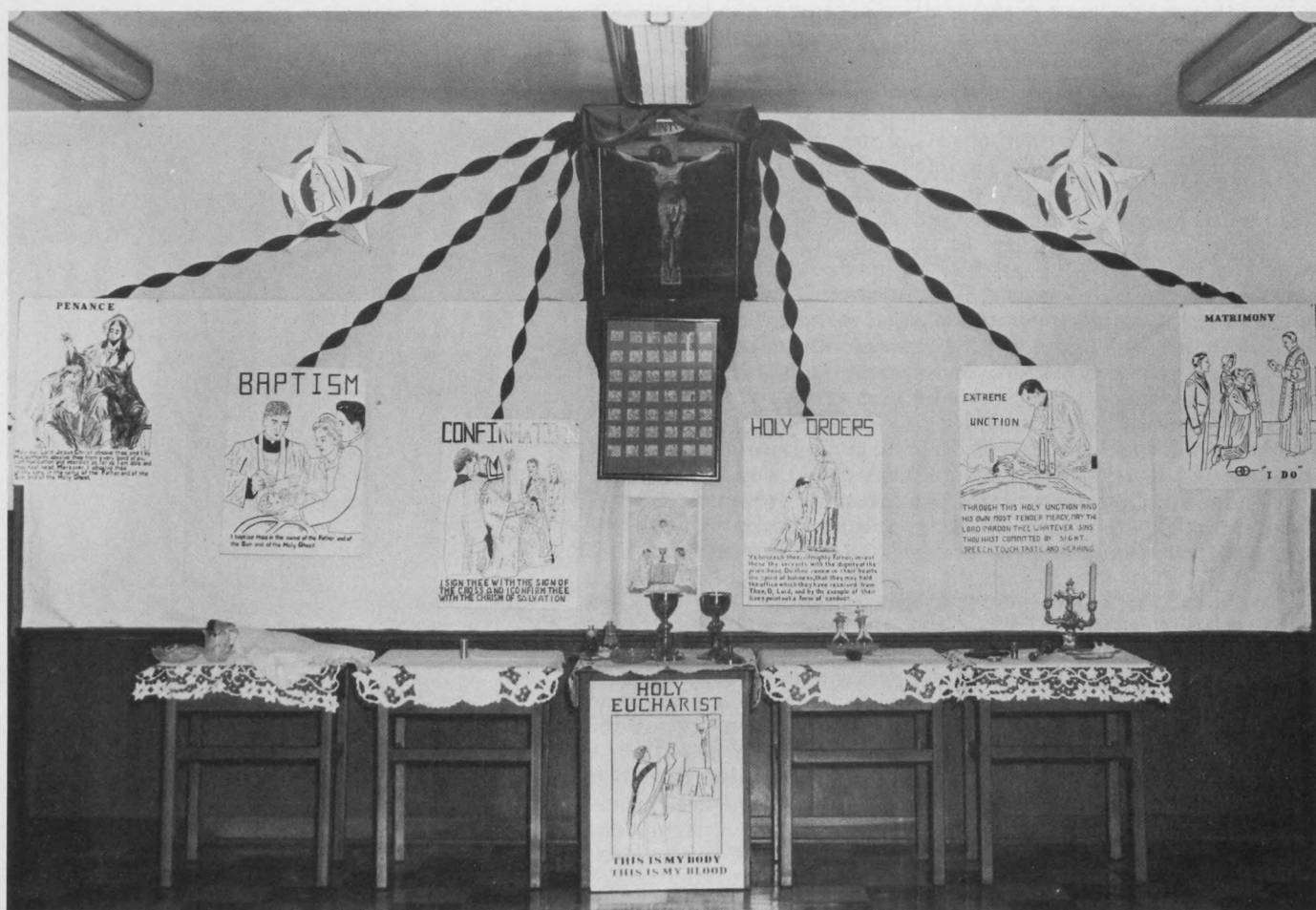
Although the number of Sisters employed in both the institutes was small in comparison with the number of girls admitted during the past ten years, the work of the Community was greatly aided by the voluntary services of a large number of generous individuals and organizations. The leisure time of the girls of Our Lady of Charity School has been utilized for supervised instruction in numerous extra-curricular activities. A wide variety of arts and crafts particularly suitable for their appeal to youthful hearts and feminine hands have been made available by members of the Catholic Women's League, the Gamma and Phi Chapters of Beta Sigma Phi, the Department

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<sup>28</sup> K. Phyllis Burns, "Group Care of Children — A Challenge to the Community," *Canadian Welfare*, May 1, 1953, italic ours.



Booth depicting the work of the Order at Vocation Exhibit in St. Alphonsus Church hall, March, 1955



Catechetical display on "the Sacraments" made by the girls at Our Lady of Charity School, 1956

of Public Welfare, the Legion of Mary, and interested individuals belonging to none of the above groups. Activities included instruction in personal development and vocational guidance, copper work, needlework, dressmaking, basketry, weaving, and the making of rugs, decorations, flowers, and stuffed animals. Such activities have proved to be an enjoyable diversion for the girls and an important factor in their rehabilitation.

The recreational needs of the girls have as well been wonderfully provided for through the unselfish efforts of volunteers. Apart from the regular physical education program, weekly instruction has been given at Our Lady of Charity School in square dancing, basketball, and volleyball. The children at O'Connell Institute profited by weekly ballet and tap-dancing lessons. The Knights of Columbus, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Active Club, the Commercial Travellers Association, the Orion Club, the Edmonton Girls' Separate High School, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the local Brownie organizations, and the Volunteer Bureau have provided seasonal parties and picnics and arranged outings to concerts, shows, and circuses for the girls from both institutions. Many parties have been put on for the children at O'Connell Institute by such kind friends as the P. R. Gaboury's, the J. W. Heffernan's, the Andy Purcell family, and the Conti family. Mr. C. B. Hill has for many years been a lively impersonator of Santa Claus at the annual Christmas party provided by the late Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Kennedy for the O'Connell kiddies.

In addition to parties, many movies of both an entertaining and educational nature have been brought through the years by the Franciscans, the Oblates, and the Salesian Fathers, the Atonement Sisters, the Misericorde Sisters, Father J. E. Pratt, O.M.I., of the St. Alexander Reserve, Mr. A. J. Smith of the Charles Camsell Hospital Film Club, and Mr. D. Bouvier of the National Film Board. The Sisters have their own movie projector which is available to both houses, and the permanent screen on the gymnasium wall at Our Lady of Charity School was recently enlarged to accommodate cinemascope films.

Besides the instruction and entertainment that have so generously been offered directly to the children, a great deal of work has been done each year on a voluntary basis by the Knights of Columbus and their Squires and other interested individuals. These self-sacrificing men and boys have spent a great deal of time keeping the grounds trim, working in the vegetable gardens, and painting and repairing the play equipment. Such great charity as these individuals display will surely not go unrewarded.

Because the north and west boundary of our property faces as it does the parklands above the winding North Saskatchewan River, the grounds around both institutions abound with various species of wild bird and animal life. Both Sisters and children take pleasure in the attractive familiarity of pheasants, blue jays, wild canaries, rabbits, porcupines and chipmunks that seem to sense security in the sanctuary of the Monastery grounds. Even a doe and her fawn have been seen gracefully loping along the wooded river bank.

Tame animals, too, play a part in enriching the lives of the children, particularly at the O'Connell Institute. Thoughtful benefactors have brought through the years a succession of ponies, dogs, kittens, lambs, rabbits, canaries, and budgie birds to occupy for a time an affectionate place in the hearts of the little ones. The girls of Our Lady of Charity School are not too sophisticated to delight in the occasional turtle, tropical fish, budgie bird, kitten, or dog. It was only recently that the beloved "Eskie" was tearfully consigned to her final resting place. This faithful German Shepherd was acquired as a pup and named



The O'Connell children take great pleasure in their weekly lessons in tap-dancing and ballet







Basketry

Arts and Crafts are an enjoyable diversion  
for the girls at Our Lady of Charity School,  
thanks to volunteer instructors

Beauty culture



Weaving

Copper work





Square dancing is a weekly event looked forward to with keen anticipation, thanks to the generosity of volunteer instructors at Our Lady of Charity School



Over 500 pieces of embroidery and other handicraft have been made during the past year by the girls at Our Lady of Charity School. These are to be sold at a bazaar in December and the money raised will be used to buy materials for next year's craft projects.





Mr. S. H. McCuaig, Q.C.



Father Timothy Ryan

after the popular Edmonton Eskimo Football team, winners of the 1954-55-56 Grey Cup, coveted symbol of Canadian football supremacy. Since football holds in Canadian hearts the place that baseball holds in the hearts of Americans, the season's games are viewed with avid interest by the girls (and many of the Sisters as well) on the T.V. sets which were added to the educational and recreational equipment of both Institutes after the advent of television in Canada in 1952.

The one thing yet coveted by the girls of Our Lady of Charity School is a swimming pool, and it is the earnest desire of the Community that sometime in the not-too-distant future this desire will be satisfied. An addition to the O'Connell Institute in 1955 provided the little ones there with an attractive indoor wading pool. Besides the wading pool, the \$127,000 two-storey addition has a large auditorium with stage, dormitories, diet kitchen, playroom for pre-school children, sewing rooms, and utility rooms. The new wing is known as the McCuaig Hall in honor of Mr. S. H. McCuaig, Q.C., who has been a benefactor of the Institute for many years and who was largely responsible for promoting the erection of the addition. Most Rev. Anthony Jordan, O.M.I., Coadjutor Archbishop of Edmonton, officiated at the blessing and dedication ceremony of the new wing on January 24, 1956. The Sisters arranged to have the blessing on the feast of St. Timothy in honor of the late Father Timothy Ryan who had played an important role in the early development of the O'Connell Institute. In the Fall of 1961 a statue of Our Blessed Mother was erected in front of McCuaig Hall in memory of Father Daniel Martin whose death in April of that year was mourned by the many orphans he had befriended for the thirty-four years of his priestly life. In November, 1961, the Montgomery Branch of the Canadian Legion presented to the Institute a piece of playground equipment for the use of the children and a plaque to be placed in the Hall in memory of Father Martin who had been Chaplain to the Montgomery Branch 24 prior to his death.

In the same year that the McCuaig Hall was opened the O'Connell Institute was again honored by the selection of one of its little girls to make the presentation of a spiritual bouquet from all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Edmonton to Archbishop MacDonald on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee of priesthood. His Excellency officiated at the laying of the cornerstone of the new St. Joseph's Seminary, and also offered Mass in the new building, September 9, 1956. After the Mass two children representing the Catholic people of the Archdiocese knelt and offered the spiritual bouquet. The celebrations closed with a pageant depicting events in the life of Archbishop MacDonald.

In August of 1958 the President of the American Federation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, Very Honored Mother Mary of St. John of the Cross, invited our Community to send representatives to the Extraordinary Chapter of the Federation to be held in Wheeling, West Virginia. Mother Mary of the Immaculate Heart, who was Superior at the time, attended the meeting accompanied by Sister Mary of the Divine Heart, present Superior, and both were kindly received by Mother President who did everything possible to make them feel at home. The Sisters were impressed by the Chapter and were very happy to meet the Superior General and her companion from France as well as the delegates from our Monasteries in the United States of America.

In September of the same year the Community was pleased to have the Religious Assistant of the American Federation, Very Rev. F. Lacroix, C.J.M., visit our Monastery in Edmonton. Father Lacroix explained to us the set-up of the American Federation and pointed out the advantages of our uniting with the other Monasteries of the Order on the North American



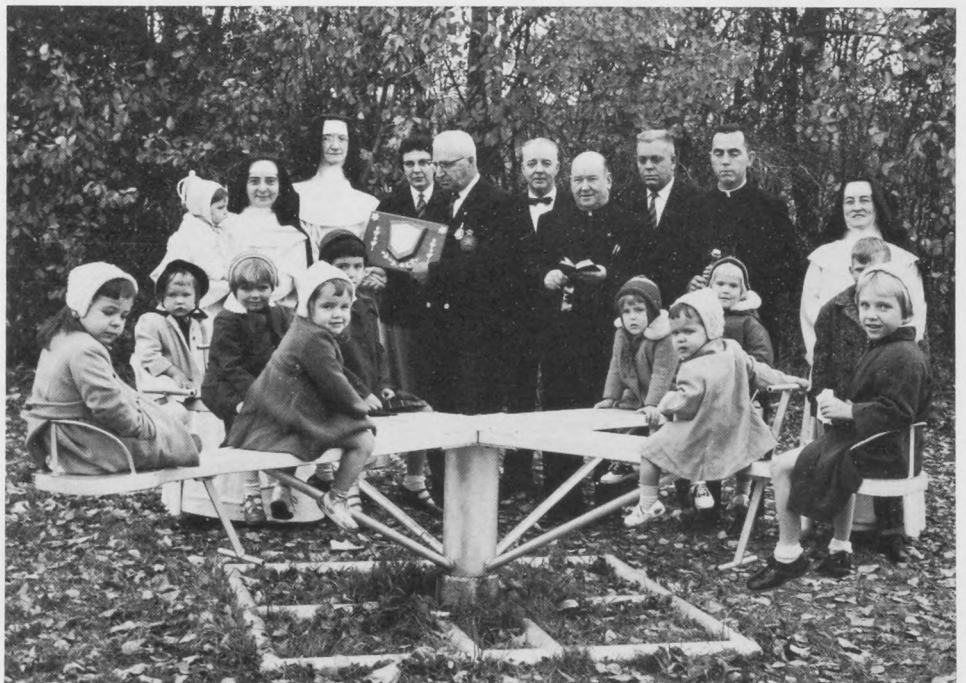


Father Daniel Martin



In the Fall of 1961 this beautiful statue of the Mother of God was erected in front of McCuaig Hall as a tribute to the work of Father Martin and the interest he took in the children at O'Connell Institute

In November of 1961 a merry-go-round and a memorial plaque were presented to Mother Annunciation in honor of Father Martin, who, prior to his death was R.C. Padre to Montgomery Branch 24 of the Canadian Legion. The presentation was made by W. W. Gordon, President of Montgomery Branch, with Father J. E. McGrane, present chaplain, giving the blessing





Camera-shy Nancy poses reluctantly with four other lambs from O'Connell Institute



Spitfire, the pony, and two of its young admirers



Only the Edmonton Eskimos rivalled in popularity their namesake, "Eskie," our faithful German Shepherd



Sister Agatha with Jessica, the calf



In September of 1956 the O'Connell Institute was honored by the selection of one of its little girls to make the presentation of a Spiritual Bouquet from all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Edmonton to Archbishop MacDonald on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee of priesthood.



Very Rev. F. Lacroix, C.J.M., Religious Assistant of the American Federation of the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity, with Superiors and Delegates at the General Chapter of the Federation, Buffalo, August, 1961





Mother Mary of the Immaculate Heart Labud  
Superior, 1952-61

continent. We felt privileged by this visit of a Eudist Father to our Monastery and admired the striking religious personality of this zealous son of St. John Eudes. The decision to join the Federation was not definitely arrived at, however, for another three years.

Two months previous to the decision regarding union the Community saw with deep regret the third term of Mother Mary of the Immaculate Heart Labud draw to a close. This valiant woman had led the Edmonton Community through a nine year period of rapid growth involving a multiplicity of problems in administration and direction. Hampered by shortage of Sisters, Mother Immaculate Heart nevertheless welcomed with a large heart all who came to her for counsel and advice or who were brought to her for guidance and rehabilitation. Mother Immaculate Heart had come as a very young girl from Duluth, Minnesota, to Edmonton to devote herself to souls, and her many years of experience with the girls of the delinquent class served to increase her already broad sympathy and cordial understanding. Possessed of many talents and utter selflessness, Mother Immaculate Heart never spared herself in laboring, both physically and spiritually, for the souls entrusted to her care.

The Sister who succeeded Mother Immaculate Heart bore the heavy burden of the Superiorship for five short months before being called to her heavenly home. Mother Mary of St. Francis of Assisi Zenko had been the first postulant from Alberta to enter the Edmonton Monastery. Her hard-working parents homesteaded in the Chipman district at a time when none of the conveniences of modern day living were yet known. Supplies were driven by ox-cart and wagon from Edmonton, some sixty miles away, through virgin forest over newly blazed trails. The thick timber of the Alberta bushland had to be rooted up and the rich land cleared and broken before a fruitful harvest would yield its treasure to the deserving laborer. Under such rigorous conditions the delicate vitality of the young Polish mother withered and died, and soon nine young children were left to the care of the pioneer patriarch, who became both father and mother to his children, nurturing in them all the virtues and traits necessary to a full moral and intellectual life. Such was his skill at bequeathing the riches of his national and religious heritage that of his nine surviving children (one died in infancy) the youngest boy became a priest (Father S. Zenko of Viking, Alberta), two girls entered the religious life (Sr. Mary of St. Stanislaus survives Mother Francis in the Edmonton Monastery of Our Lady of Charity), and the others are exemplary Catholics following in the footsteps of a wise and saintly sire.

After the older members of the family left home to enter their various careers, Sister Francis took upon herself the responsibility of caring for her younger brothers and sisters. Later she left her rural environment to come to Edmonton to complete her high school. She was advised by Rev. A. Sylla, O.M.I., to seek admittance at the 96th Street Monastery where boarders were accepted for schooling during the early 1920's. In this way she became acquainted with the work of the Order and her heart was soon inflamed with desire to offer her life for the salvation of souls. After graduation from St. Mary's High School she was admitted to the postulancy in 1925, year of the canonization of St. John Eudes. She received holy habit on August 31, 1926 and made her profession of vows on September 11, 1928.

It was not long before Sister Francis' extraordinary talent for sewing was discovered and she was engaged for many years in making sacred vestments and doing tailoring for the clergy

of the archdiocese. She always strove to make each stitch as perfect as possible, and this perfection was a reflection of the interior life which she assiduously nourished by a multiplicity of hidden sacrifices. She was never easy on herself and was an energetic and persistent worker. Her zeal for faithful observance of the Rule and of the minutest customs soon marked her as an exemplary Religious fit to be entrusted with the delicate task of forming young Religious in the spiritual life. For fourteen years she was Mistress of Novices, and those who had the happiness of her direction still cherish the memory of this admirable Mother.

Before Mother Mary of St. Francis was elected to the Superiorship in May of 1961 she had for three years held the position of Assistant in the Community. One of her first acts as Superior was to determine the disposition of the entire Community regarding union with the American Federation. At the General Chapter of the Federation held in Buffalo in August of 1961, Mother Francis conveyed the wish of the Edmonton Community to acquire membership in the Federation. The General Chapter was generous in its welcome and immediately petitioned Rome to grant the request.

On June 13, 1962, feast of St. Anthony of Padua, His Eminence Valerio Cardinal Valeri, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious and Protector of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, signed the decree which aggregated the Monastery of Edmonton to the American Federation, granting it all the rights and obligations that the other Monasteries of the Federation legitimately enjoy and possess.

Mother Francis had not lived to see the promulgation of the desired decree. On October 5, 1961, the day following the celebration of the feast of her patron, St. Francis of Assisi, she died as the result of a cerebral hemorrhage suffered two days previously. Mother Francis' sudden death was a blow to the Sisters and a great loss to the Community. Mother Mary of the Divine Heart Pilon, native of St. Anthony's parish, Edmonton, was subsequently elected to the position of Superior.

Mother Divine Heart's vitality and progressive attitudes, her comprehension of the religious life and her devotion to the teachings of St. John Eudes have brought the Edmonton Community the great privilege of having her named as a councillor of the American Federation. This unexpected honor was bestowed on Mother Divine Heart during August, 1962, when the Federation Council elected her to fill the vacancy resulting from the resignation of one of the councillors. Mother Divine Heart was attending the Sister Formation Workshop in Pittsburgh at the time that she was informed of her appointment. From Pittsburgh she proceeded to our Monastery in Coraopolis where she participated in the council meeting, and brought to the attention of the Federation the desire of one of the Edmonton Sisters to do missionary work in Africa.

The little mission in Nairobi, Kenya, Africa, had been opened on May 1, 1959, by the Sisters of the English Federation of the Order. Since that time three or four Sisters from England have courageously carried on the work of the apostolate among the natives, but their need for more help has been urgent. During the summer of this year, 1962, the Mother President of the English Federation solicited aid from the American Federation for the struggling mission. Letters were sent to each of the Monasteries in North America asking for a volunteer for five years. When the letter was read in Edmonton it kindled the apostolic zeal of Sister Mary of St. Theresa McLaughlin who generously expressed her desire to go to Africa. Although hard pressed for subjects, the Edmonton Sisters decided to sacrifice a valuable member of the Community to the urgent need of the



Mother Mary of St. Francis of Assisi Zenko  
Superior, May-October, 1961  
Died October 5, 1961



Sister Mary of St. Theresa McLaughlin

African mission, hoping by this offering to merit future vocations.

Thus it happens that coincident with the closing of the Fiftieth Jubilee of the foundation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity in Edmonton, and also with the opening of the Second Vatican Council, new horizons open to the Community in Edmonton as one of its members sets out to fulfil the work of laboring for souls in a mission land. It may well be said that we feel ourselves at the beginning of a new epoch, "and this new epoch," in the words of His Holiness Pope John XXIII, "can expect dignity, prosperity and blessing only from Christ, glorious and immortal King of centuries and peoples."<sup>29</sup> For a half century the good God has sustained and prospered the little seedling which now stands as a mighty oak, a manifestation of the power, the love, and the providence of the Spouse of Souls. With all our hearts we, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Edmonton, thank Him for His countless gifts to our dear Community during the past fifty years, gifts of parents, friends, and benefactors, gifts both spiritual and material, gifts of souls.

True, there have been sorrows and hardships, but they were blessings in disguise, thunder showers which served a mighty purpose, the cross, which is the trade-mark of the work of Christ. Our earnest prayer is that we may continue to receive from the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary those innumerable and necessary gifts which our Holy Founder St. John Eudes has promised to bequeath to his faithful daughters, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity.

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<sup>29</sup> Pope John XXIII, Apostolic Letter *Sacrae Laudis*, Jan: 6, 1962.



Aerial view of the property of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Edmonton







